





Mercenary firm escapes prosecution over alleged breaches of UN embargo □ Cook orders inquiry into departments' handling of affair

# FO delayed arms alert to Customs

Richard Norton-Taylor and Lucy Ward

**F**OREIGN Office officials waited a month after hearing allegations of sanctions-busting in Sierra Leone before alerting Customs and Excise. It emerged yesterday that the mercenary firm Sandline will not face prosecution over alleged breaches of a UN arms embargo.

Announcing a two-man independent inquiry into the handling of the affair by the FO and other departments, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, confirmed suggestions, disclosed in the Guardian last week, that officials had warned Sandline at a meeting in mid-January that sanctions covered arms supplies to all sides in the civil war in the West African republic.

Mr Cook, free to speak more fully about the affair now that the Customs investigation is over, told MPs that an official had restated details of the arms ban after Lt Col Tim Spicer, of Sandline, told them he had heard someone else was planning to run shipments of arms

to Sierra Leone. He asked the legal position on the terms of the embargo, but did not suggest his own London-based firm had such plans.

Confirmation that the FO heard the claims at the January 19 meeting means there was a month between first indications of planned sanctions-busting and the February 18 meeting at which Customs were first notified of an alleged breach by Sandline.

The FO did not formally alert Customs by letter until March 10. Asked about the delay, a Foreign Office spokesman said last night: "If we knew all the answers to all these questions we would not have any investigation."

Sandline last night flatly denied Mr Cook's statement to the Commons. "We entirely disagree with his version of events in the FO," a company spokeswoman said.

The timescale of events will form a core part of the independent inquiry, to be headed by Sir Thomas Legg, who retired last month as permanent secretary in the Lord Chancellor's department. He will be backed by Sir Robin Ibb, a former ICI director



Demonstrators yesterday protested in favour of Peter Penfold

PHOTOGRAPH: NOS TODAY

and a one-time advisor to Margaret Thatcher.

The task of the inquiry is to establish what government officials, including military personnel and the intelligence services — knew about

plans to supply arms to Sierra Leone, whether any official encouragement or approval was given to such plans and, if so, on what authority.

The Foreign Secretary said the inquiry would have access to all relevant government files, papers and records.

"It will also cover the intelligence agencies and will have regard to any communication or any report received by

## Diary of a debacle

May 25 1997: Military coup overthrows democratically elected government of Sierra Leone.

October 8: UN Security Council imposes arms embargo on Sierra Leone.

January 19 1998: Sandline boss Lt Col Tim Spicer attends a meeting at the Foreign Office.

January 27: Fighting breaks out in Sierra Leone between junta forces and West African peacekeeping force (Ecomog).

February 5: Lord Avebury informs Foreign Office of alleged Sandline deal.

February 12: Ecomog forces expel junta from Freetown.

February 18: Foreign Office tells Customs of allegations against Sandline.

March 10: President Kabbah reinstated. Foreign Office formally refers to Customs allegations of illegal arms sales by Sandline.

March 13: Foreign Office minister Tony Lloyd says reports linking British High Commissioner to "hired killers" employed by counter-coup forces are "scurrilous and ill-informed".

April: Customs seize documents and computer records from Lt Col Spicer.

April 28: Robin Cook shown letter from Sandline lawyers insisting it was acting with government approval.

ign affairs spokesman, Menzies Campbell, claimed that Customs' decision not to prosecute had become inevitable after Tony Blair had dismissed the controversy as a "hoo-ba". He said: "The fact that there is to be no prosecution does not mean there was no breach of any embargo or of domestic criminal law."

Customs made clear yesterday that the warning to Sandline, delivered by Craig Murray, deputy head of the FO's Equatorial Africa Department, did not provide sufficient evidence to warrant a prosecution.

In a statement released shortly before the debate Customs said: "Though offences may have been committed, the particular circumstances leading up to the supply affect the fairness of the case to the extent that any prosecution could well fail and would certainly not be in the public interest."

John Morris, the Attorney General — whose consent was needed for a prosecution — "confirmed" the Customs decision, the statement said.

Roberts inflict random terror, page 7

## Sketch

### QC's clichés let Cook off hook

Simon Hoggart

**T**HE Foreign Secretary was tied to the tracks, and the train was heading his way. The tension was unbearable. Even Nicholas Soames just kept awake, by fanning his face.

But instead of being the Santa Fe Flyer, the engine turned out to be some wheezing, Rowland Emmett creation, with a kettle where the funnel should be, and a whis-

kery old driver brewing up as the train headed south at a gentle strolling speed.

So Mr Cook — I will now abandon this over-extended metaphor — had plenty of time to break free. His opposite number, Michael Howard, was simply no good.

QCs are supposed to be brilliant at marshalling facts and persuading a jury, in the teeth of the evidence if necessary.

After yesterday's performance I would not want Mr Howard to defend me on a charge of taking the office paperclips home.

He wasn't helped by the fact that the Tory argument is on a

very narrow matter: they want a High Court judge instead of a QC to head the inquiry in the Sierra Leone business.

I can't imagine anyone marching down from Jarrow in support of that, even with those embroidered old-fashioned banners: "Crunch! Working Folk Cannot Support a Whitehall-Based Insider Lawyer Investigating A Matter Of Such Moment!"

No cliché was left unturned, no hackneyed phrase unstoned. The affair was a "Whitehall farce". "If it were

not so serious, it would be laughable," he announced, using a line which even prep school headmasters have, I suspect, long abandoned.

The Foreign Office was "a laughing stock around the world". (Really? Do they split their sides in Duke's Bar, Seattle, when the name of Sir John Kerr is raised? Do stand-ups in the Rambrod Comedy Klub get yucks with every mention of Tony Lloyd?)

He invented his own fresh clichés, too. "He will be paving the way for a whitewash again!" he said. (Or priming the pump to put up a nice, flagged pathway, perhaps.)

Not quite the worst moment was when he reminded the House that the Prime Minister had called the affair "an overblown hoo-ba". Mr Howard signalled his joke: "Who? Is indeed the question. Ha! is not a sufficient answer."

"Groan" is what the happy Labour backbenchers did. No, the worst moment came when he challenged Tony Lloyd, who is the Africa minister in the Foreign Office, on whether Sandline and its involvement had been discussed at two meetings.

"No," said Mr Lloyd. Now, as any good bird will tell you, it is a great mistake ever to

ask a question, especially a question on which your case turns. If you don't already know the answer or have a ready riposte. Mr Howard had none, and Mr Lloyd scored his first triumph in what has been a disastrous month for him.

Mr Cook wasn't brilliant, but he didn't need to be. His line again was: we didn't help, but if the people of Sierra Leone like to think we did, who are we to disabuse them?

"They are delighted to be rid of a savage military regime which killed their sons and raped their daughters!" he shouted.

Why, Britain had even

funded a radio station so that President Kabbah could speak directly to his people. This was "practical, moral and political support for the restoration of democracy". Fine, just so long as they didn't send Chris Evans too.

He even delivered a mock-apology. "Last week I said that you [Mr Howard] had lost 13 cases in the courts while Home Secretary. I regret to inform the House that I had overlooked four cases, making a grand total of 17. And not once did he demand a public inquiry!"

Mr Howard sat smiling. Heaven knows why.



Karen Murray, who collapsed and died after complaining of severe stomach pain, eight years after intestinal surgery

## Gauze 'in patient 8 years'

Young Briton's death in Corfu blamed on surgical debris

Helena Smith in Athens and David Ward

**A** YOUNG Briton who died suddenly while on holiday in Corfu suffered a heart attack triggered by surgical material left inside her body several years ago, a Greek pathologist said yesterday.

Karen Murray, aged 19, had complained of severe stomach pains and had vomited frequently since arriving on the Greek island. But she had been too scared to visit a doctor, her boyfriend, Brian Holloway, told British embassy officials.

Ms Murray, a part-time waitress, eventually saw a doctor on Friday. After collapsing she was taken by ambulance to the general hospital in Corfu Town, but died during the journey.

Stephanos Gasteratos, who carried out a post-mortem, said four large pieces of gauze and four plastic clips had been found in Ms Murray's intestine.

"They had obviously been in her body for several years and had grown into a tumour that had gradually prevented her large intestine from functioning. I have never seen anything like it before."

Dr Gasteratos denied reports that one or more steel blades had been discovered

inside Ms Murray's body. He said the gauze and clips had caused acute toxic poisoning which in turn prompted the heart attack.

A solicitor acting for Ms Murray's family confirmed that she had surgery for a lower bowel disorder at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, in Liverpool, in October and December 1990. She had then carried on a normal life until last week.

Ms Murray's brother, Paul Walker, said his family was "completely in the dark" about the events surrounding her death. "The family have not been informed officially of the circumstances of Karen's

death or informed that there has been a post-mortem or of its findings," he said at the family home in Birkdale, Merseyside.

Alder Hey hospital later said Ms Murray had been a patient eight years ago, but it declined to release any clinical information until it had been contacted by the dead woman's family. "We are looking into this matter and would not wish to speculate on press reports until the full facts are available," a spokesman said.

A spokesman for Southport and district general hospital confirmed that Ms Murray had also been a patient there but added: "No operation was performed on this patient."

Dr Gasteratos, who oversaw the autopsy with two other doctors, said surgeons

sometimes forgot to remove medical items from patients after surgery. "But usually patients will return to a doctor if that is the case because of the pain they cause."

The full results of the post-mortem are not expected to be released for another six weeks. But it is understood that the tour operator which flew Ms Murray to the island has arranged for her body to be brought home tonight.

Costas Gramanos, at the mortuary in Corfu Town, said: "Everything has been done to return the body to Britain as soon as possible."

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "Our consulates there and here are in touch with Ms Murray's family. The cause of her death is a matter for the post-mortem or coroner's inquiry."

## Microsoft charged with attempt to crush rival

Mark Tran in New York

**T**HE United States government yesterday accused Microsoft of trying to carve up the Internet browser market illegally with rival Netscape, and of trying to destroy Netscape when it refused.

The claim forms the most damaging element of a landmark legal action launched against the world's most powerful computer software company by the justice department yesterday.

The department and 20 US states accuse Microsoft of using illegal anti-competitive practices to destroy rivals and avoid competition.

The general outline of the case was already known but the government yesterday laid out much more serious accusations than expected. It claimed that Microsoft sought to enter "an illegal conspiracy to divide the market with Netscape". When Netscape rejected the proposal, Microsoft "cut off Net-

scape's air supply", in the words of one Microsoft official.

Microsoft is accused of abusing its monopoly in personal computer operating systems to gain market power in new areas, particularly the Internet.

"No firm should be permitted to use its monopoly power to develop a chokehold on the browser software to access the Internet," said the attorney-general, Janet Reno, at a Washington press conference to announce the charges.

Not since Washington broke up the AT&T phone monopoly in 1982 has the government challenged a company as mighty as Microsoft, which controls 90 per cent of the market for operating systems, largely through Windows 95.

In addition to the justice department's suit, 20 state attorneys-general are also filing their own separate but similar legal challenge.

The government and the states have asked for a preliminary injunction requiring

Microsoft to include Netscape's browser in Windows 98, the successor to Windows 95. If Microsoft was unwilling to incorporate Netscape Navigator, then it would have to disable its own Internet Explorer from Windows.

The government also wants to eliminate provisions in Microsoft's licensing and marketing contracts that restrict the ability of PC makers to choose which browser to install on their machines.

The legal wrangle is likely to go on for years, probably well into the next century, unless the parties decide to settle out of court.

The case against AT&T lasted eight years.

In going against Microsoft, the justice department is challenging an entity with enormous resources. Micro-

soft can be expected to fight a war of delays and attrition in the hope that the next administration — Democratic or Republican — will take a more docile attitude.

Microsoft, page 12

## Russian tragedy in 3 dimensions

### Review

Andrew Clements

Boris Godunov

Welsh National Opera, Cardiff

**F**ACES, of the oppressors and the oppressed, are the visual signature of Welsh National Opera's fine new Boris Godunov. Su Hume and Donna Muir's designs for David Pountney's tirelessly inventive staging use photo blow-ups — of silently screaming mouths and gimlet, all-seeing eyes — as motifs to pattern both their sets and costumes, in which militaristic blacks and greys are juxtaposed with brilliant primary colours.

This is Mussorgsky's masterpiece updated to the 20th century, tsarist suppression reworked into Russia's serial miseries of our own time.

With just a couple of small additions of later music, WNO has opted for the earliest and

most concentrated version of the score, Mussorgsky's seven scenes from 1869, so that there is no "Polish" act and hence no substantial female role. The result is to anchor the opera much more tightly on the role of Boris himself.

Willard White does not nail down his performance as Boris with quite enough authority to make that haunted presence reverberate through the opera as it should — his singing is too monochrome and smoothed out, though he is affecting in the final moments of the death scene.

But the detail that Pountney applies to every aspect of the production gives this world a three-dimensionality that makes it utterly consistent and credible.

Carlo Rizzi's conducting, relishing the raw-boned, elemental quality in Mussorgsky's own orchestration, keeps everything but, never misses a theatrical opportunity in the majestic set pieces and makes the gutsy singing of the WNO chorus the dramatic bedrock of the evening.

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Coward's retreat



# For sale: island haven, would suit rich, famous and artistic

The Art Deco hotel on Burgh Island, off the Devon coast, has played host to Noel Coward (top), Agatha Christie (below), Edward, Prince of Wales and Wallis Simpson. Now the 26-acre, wildlife-rich island is on the market at more than £3 million. **Geoffrey Gibbs reports**



Tony Porter, who with his wife Beatrice has spent 12 years painstakingly restoring the island's hotel

**V**ISITORS boarding the giant hydraulically driven sea tractor to cross the few hundred yards to Burgh Island off the south Devon coast often have that well-heeled, celebrity look about them.

Over the coming weeks it will be no surprise if they and their financial advisers are sent in even greater abundance. The 26-acre island, complete with celebrated Art Deco hotel that once entertained Agatha Christie and Noel Coward, is up for sale at more than £3 million.

For centuries the wildlife-rich island, close to the shore in Bigbury Bay, was a home

to pilchard fishermen whose look-outs would keep watch from its peak for the looming waters that meant a shoal was within reach.

A 14th century pub — the Pilchard Inn — provides a reminder of earlier times. But it was more recent history that drew the present owners to the island and which is said to have generated a flurry of interest since it went on the market at the weekend.

Fashion consultants Tony and Beatrice Porter have spent the last 12 years painstakingly restoring the hotel to the condition in which Edward, Prince of Wales and Wallis Simpson would have found it when they used the

island as a hideaway from the press.

Lauded as a "temple of Art Deco" the hotel was built almost 70 years ago for the wealthy industrialist Archibald Nesfield, a founder of the engineering group GKN, who also owned London's Comedy Theatre where Agatha Christie's plays were staged.

Noel Coward and Christie used to visit the island and the writer made it the setting for two of her best known mysteries — *And Then There Were None* and *Evil Under the Sun*.

Noel Coward is believed to have spent time at the hotel in 1930 or 1931, according to Mr Porter.

He said: "When I was working away on the hotel an elderly gentleman came in and asked if he could look around. He came into the palm court, pointed to one of the Lloyd Loom sofas and told me: 'The last time I was here Noel Coward was sitting over there'."

"According to local folklore, Coward came for three days and stayed for three weeks."

When the Porters acquired the property in the mid-1980s the hotel was run-down and barely recognisable as the Art Deco masterpiece of half a century before.

Closed in the 1960s, it had been used as self-catering accommodation — the bed-

rooms turned into bachelors' with bunk beds and the Twenties ballroom into a TV lounge.

Restoration work has turned the hotel into a profitable business and Mr Porter admits to mixed feelings about putting it up for sale and leaving Burgh Island.

"When I go across to the mainland forever I won't look back over my shoulder because I will be too sad. But we have been here for 12 years and that is a big chunk out of anyone's working life. This place can only be run in a very hands-on way and the time is coming when it has to be done properly or not at all."

Harrods Estates, the property firm handling the sale, say they expect the island to appeal to a wealthy individual wanting a private island or a hotel company wanting to run the business as a going concern.

A spokesman said news of the sale had already generated a good level of interest both from the UK and overseas, including inquiries from people who had stayed on the island in the past.

Mr Porter felt the island might prove of interest to a small specialist hotel operator. "I don't think it will go to one of those big chains where people are treated like sausages," he said.

# Trimble and Hume unite to save Yes campaign

John Mullin  
Ireland Correspondent

**U**LSTER Unionist leader David Trimble and SDLP leader John Hume will tonight try to revive the flagging Yes campaign for the Good Friday agreement when they are introduced to a rock concert as the men responsible for a new era in Northern Ireland's history.

Campaigners for the deal believe that the image of the two leaders together will halt the drift to the No lobby. They are confident they can persuade two-thirds of undecided voters, about 20 per cent of the electorate, to back it.

It has taken four weeks to persuade the men to come together. Neither is expected to speak to the expected audience of 20,000 people. Ash, the band from Downpatrick, Co Down, will introduce them. Irish band U2 will also play at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.

Yes campaigners are drawing comfort from yesterday's poll in the Daily Telegraph. It put support for the deal at 61 per cent, with the No vote on 16 per cent, and 21 per cent still undecided. They think that don't know would have already switched to the No camp if they intended to vote against the deal.

Quintin Oliver, director of the non-party Yes campaign, said: "Our job is to persuade them to come with us. The indications are that a majority of them will. Many will decide to vote yes with the ballot paper in front of them and a pencil in their hand."

Tony Blair and Mr Trimble have said they want at least 70 per cent of voters to endorse the deal. That would mean a comfortable majority for it in the Unionist community, making it more difficult for opponents to wreck the assembly and, with it, the cross-border bodies.

President Clinton, speaking after the European Union-United States conference at Downing Street, again backed the Yes campaign. He said: "I think the risk of doing this is so much smaller than the risk of letting it blow apart."

Mr Clinton said he had decided against going to Northern Ireland to aid the Yes campaign for fear that his message would be distorted.

Mr Trimble warned that Mr Clinton's arrival could antagonise doubtful Unionists.

Mr Clinton said: "The easiest thing in politics is simply to say no. The easiest thing is to say 'Change is something I am afraid of. I say to every-

one who takes that attitude 'Reflect on what the future holds if there is a No vote'."

Mr Blair said: "Every generation gets its chances. This is the chance for this generation in Northern Ireland and we have done our best to provide it, but in the end it is their decision."

But Jeffrey Donaldson, Ulster Unionist MP for Lagan Valley, said he would continue to oppose the deal. Mr Donaldson, a likely future leader, is seen as a weather-vane of Unionism, and Mr Blair has fought hard to seduce him into the Yes camp.

Mr Donaldson was still alarmed at the accelerated release programme for terrorist prisoners and the weakness of the agreement on the decommissioning of terrorist weapons. His fear that Sinn Féin can take its place in the proposed power-sharing executive before the IRA hands in any weapons is the main concern of Unionists.

He said: "I don't think that the agreement can be changed at this stage and therefore I have to vote on what is in the agreement."

"Based on what is in the

**'Every generation gets its chances. This is the chance for this generation in Northern Ireland'**

agreement and the prospect of having people like Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness who are still linked to the IRA become ministers in the government of Northern Ireland, I cannot support it. Nor can I support the premature release of terrorist prisoners, some of them guilty of mass murder in Northern Ireland, on both sides, without requiring the terrorist organisations to which belong to actually deliver peace."

Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, written off as a political force just after the deal was struck, said: "We will see just what has happened this Friday and I believe we can win this election."

Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, will visit today to back a Yes vote. Mr Blair and Tory leader William Hague, are expected before polling on Friday.

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Analysis, page 11; Conor Gearty, page 8

# Indonesia on brink of war

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resubtle, which reform-minded Indonesians have already warned will be too little, too late.

"The politics behind it is that there are many watchdogs around Wiranto and he does not feel he has sufficient support yet to go against his bosses, particularly the old man," said Nino Jahja, a student leader.

"It is written on the wall that Suharto is finished and it is just a matter of time before Wiranto chooses to accept it," Mochtar Buchori, an academic, added.

In the meantime, however, Indonesia appears to be dangerously polarised just as it braces for mass demonstrations tomorrow to mark the birth of the country's independence movement.

Despite the shock of last week's violence, student and academic organisers are preparing to fill the streets of Jakarta and other major cities with a mass demonstration on a scale never seen in Mr Suharto's 32-year rule.

The military's fear, aired by Gen Wiranto yesterday, is that these events could degenerate into a repetition of last week's rioting and looting. He

warned that organisers "are not considering the possibility of casualties".

The chilling observation came as Jakarta organised two separate mass burials for several hundred bodies burnt beyond recognition in the fires that engulfed shopping malls and several thousand other buildings in last week's riots. The Foreign Office confirmed yesterday that two British men, one aged 35, were killed in Jakarta last week during an apparent robbery.

Jakarta military command warned yesterday that it would crack down on any further violence.

"If those doing the rioting are students we won't see students but rioters. If those doing the damage are lecturers we won't see lecturers but rioters," a senior officer warned.

The fear among the reform movement is that a bid by Mr Suharto to thwart it can only ignite anarchy.

"If we don't have the response that the people want," warned academic activist and retired brigadier-general Harjardi Darmawan, "I think the people have the right to go their own way."

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# 4 BRITAIN

## John Mullin reports on the problems piling up for David Trimble and his party as their opponents reap the rewards of cohesion

# Unionists suffer as Sinn Fein soars

### The most recent polls

**The Guardian**

How would you vote if there was a referendum held today on the Northern Ireland peace agreement?

|            | Northern Ireland | Irish Republic | Britain |
|------------|------------------|----------------|---------|
| For        | 73%              | 61%            | 81%     |
| Against    | 14%              | 20%            | 4%      |
| Don't know | 13%              | 19%            | 15%     |

\*Yes, in favour of changing the constitution; No, against change

### THE IRISH TIMES

How do you intend to vote in the referendum on the Northern Ireland agreement on May 22?

|            | Northern Ireland | Irish Republic | Unionists in N Ireland |
|------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Yes        | 56%              | 72%            | 35%                    |
| No         | 25%              | 5%             | 45%                    |
| Don't know | 19%              | 23%            | 20%                    |

\*Includes members from other minority parties

### The Daily Telegraph

How will you vote in the referendum on the Northern Ireland agreement??

|            | N Ireland Protestants | All N Ireland voters | N Ireland Catholics |
|------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Yes        | 43%                   | 61%                  | 89%                 |
| No         | 27%                   | 16%                  | 2%                  |
| Don't know | 28%                   | 21%                  | 8%                  |

**A** LONG, long time ago, Mitchell McConnell, Sinn Fein's chairman, emerged from the Buildings at Stormont. His shattered look clashed with his bright tie, patterned with strawberries. His despair was palpable.

The multi-party negotiations on Northern Ireland's future were close to collapse, he said, as Unionists made big inroads. His hint was clear enough: Sinn Fein was on the point of walking out. It was just after 2am on Good Friday.

Mr McConnell's time had changed dramatically before breakfast on that historic day. Ever since the Good Friday agreement has gone on getting better and better for Sinn Fein. Simultaneously it has become increasingly thorny for David Trimble, Ulster Unionist leader.

Yesterday's Daily Telegraph poll shows a remarkable turn-around from the Guardian's own poll in April, when 73 per cent of voters in Northern Ireland were in favour, 14 per cent against and 13 per cent undecided. The figures are now 56 per cent in favour, 25 per cent against, with a sizeable 19 per cent still undecided.

Mr Trimble needs at least a 65 per cent yes vote to be sure a majority of Unionists have backed the deal. Anything less would mean a Unionist bloc determined to deadlock the assembly, and, with it, all other proposed institutions. It might also spell the end for him as party leader.

Sinn Fein's marvellous cohesion and ability to wring the best out of any given situation are important. Mr Trimble, in contrast, is in the middle of a mess; Unionism was split anyway, and so too is his party.

There are serious problems for Unionists on the accelerated release programme for prisoners. Most, though, would be out anyway in two years time, and recidivism is low. The proposed reform of the RUC, meanwhile, is on the back burner, and Ulster Unionists are happy enough with the appointment of Chris Patton to head that investigation.

But Mr Trimble cannot escape the issue of decommissioning terrorist weapons. The deal says next to nothing on it, and Mr Blair's Good Friday letter is scant enough. The promise boils down to this: if the proposals on decommissioning are failing, then Mr Blair will look again at how to tackle the issue.

It was always going to be a miserable period for Mr Trimble. His vulnerability has hardly been aided by the blunders of the British and Irish governments in releasing several prisoners to attend the crucial Sinn Fein and the nine days ago.

The Balcombe Street gang had already been transferred to Irish jurisdiction, but Mr Trimble, Northern Ireland Secretary, knew they would be at the conference. She also gave special parole to four IRA prisoners from Northern Ireland to attend, and several more were allowed to use

other forms of parole to which they are entitled to make the journey to Dublin.

Ms Mowlam said she wanted a massive vote for the deal, so marginalising republican dissidents. She certainly achieved that: a whopping 96 per cent of Sinn Fein delegates voted to say yes and to take up seats in the assembly, though everyone knew the Sinn Fein leadership already had the vote in the bag. The party is incredibly loyal to its leaders, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness.

Bertie Ahern, the Irish premier, was criticising Unionist doubters again in a speech on Saturday. He said: "I am somewhat impatient of this ongoing debate, whether the agreement strengthens or weakens the union. With all due respect to those who have expended energy or ink on that issue, the question is meaningless. It misses the whole point of the agreement."

The Government's conduct of the campaign has hardly been adept. On the one hand it tries to suggest it is simply a decision for the people of Northern Ireland, while on the other Mr Blair is fighting hard for a yes vote. He is, in a sense, the yes campaign.

It hardly got off to the finest of starts with a leaked memo outlining how it intended to manage the campaign. The prime ministerial visits, Bill Clinton's intervention, Gordon Brown's £215 million investment package and belated help for victims of the Troubles are making Unionists feel they are being huddled.



Farmer Harry Stevenson canvasses for a no vote on the streets of Moira ahead of Friday's referendum on the Ulster peace deal. PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN BOYES

## The heat is on for people of Moira as the noes step up their campaign

John Mullin  
Ireland Correspondent

**I**T WAS sweltering yesterday in Moira, Co Down, and temperatures are continuing to rise in this handsome place of 3,500 souls. Awards come thick and fast, and the welcome signs proclaim it Northern Ireland's best-kept small town, 1993.

This is an overwhelmingly Protestant community, where well-preserved folk are determined to hold on to the secrets of their age. Their reticence on such issues seems strange, modest pride mixed with an old-fashioned insistence on good manners.

They feel misunderstood by outsiders, and say so trenchantly. Personal matters are just that; political issues are aired with some spleen.

So it was outside the Orange Hall yesterday. As the toddlers left play group and the youngsters arrived for ballet class, Harry Stevenson, a farmer, was talking about his fervent opposition to the Good Friday agreement.

He is canvassing neighbours, and spending three hours a day knocking on doors ahead of Friday's referendum. He usually finds them open, for Moira, like scores of similar places, has serious doubts about voting yes.

One resident voting no is its Mr, Ulster Unionist Jeffrey Donaldson. He has rebuffed Tony Blair's attempts to seduce him on side, although locals joke he must have splinters in his backside from so much fence-sitting.

Half a dozen of their number have died in the troubles, shot by the IRA.

Then there was the bomb.

Three months ago, dissident republicans left it in a van outside the RUC barracks. Pensioners enjoying a dinner dance had been evacuated from the parish hall only five minutes before the 1,000lb device exploded.

Mr Stevenson, who admitted only that he should have retired some time back, said: "If it is such a good deal, why do Tony Blair and Bill Clinton have to tell us it's such a good deal? They tell us it's our vote, and then they tell us it would be wrong to use it to vote no."

It was the appearance of the

**'We are being taken for mugs. There is an alternative: to police the country property'**

Balcombe Street gang at Sinn Fein's and their nine days ago which most repulsed Moira people. It crystallised nagging doubts over the deal, said Mr Stevenson. He felt it nailed the lie that Sinn Fein is distinct from the IRA.

Mr Stevenson said: "People in England should ask themselves: would they want to see people like Ian Brady and Myra Hindley out? I doubt if popular opinion would support that. I view IRA killers in much the same way as English people view the Moors murderers. But what we are being asked to swallow goes further. We are being asked to accept mass killers and their representatives into government, with their military machinery still intact."

People are as angry over the subsequent appearance at the Ulster Democratic Party's rally of Michel Stone, the infamous loyalist killer. Their adherence is to law and order, and they detest paramilitaries on both sides. They believe Stone's parole was cack-handed, a clumsy, offensive attempt to buy off Protestant outrage over the Balcombe Street gang fiasco.

William Wright, aged 51, a joiner, said: "I am a Protestant. Lots of my friends are Catholic. We are all disgusted at the prisoners' issue."

"I feel we are being taken for mugs. We are not stupid. We understand what this deal means, and it certainly doesn't mean the IRA is giving up its weapons. There are no guarantees of that."

"There is an alternative to this deal: to police the country property. People are going to be shocked by the size of the no vote."

Jim Dillon, another farmer in his late fifties, said the Government had been responsible for gaffe after gaffe. He is an Ulster Unionist, and is voting yes. There is, though, no canvassing.

Mr Dillon, a councillor for 21 years, said: "It has been very difficult for us. But although people complain about the release of prisoners, reform of the police and decommissioning of terrorist weapons, few enough are moaning about the constitutional changes. They are good for Unionism."

Denise Wilson, aged 29, an administrator, said she too would be voting yes. She had taken little interest in the debate, but was hoping for peace. Another woman, aged 66, was similarly detached. She would back the agreement for her grandchildren's sake.



## Gentleman thief jailed for his role in Picasso plot

Cat burglar turned tennis coach is back inside for 3½ years. Sarah Hall reports

**H**E HAS spent the past 10 years, he says, on the straight and narrow, teaching tennis, rowing, teaching poverty, and reminding about his exploits as "king of the cat burglars".

But last night Peter Scott — a "gentleman thief" who has plundered the jewellery boxes of Sophia Loren, Elizabeth Taylor, Mia Farrow and Zsa Zsa Gabor — was once again languishing at Her Majesty's pleasure. He was jailed for 3½ years for his role in a complex plot to sell a stolen \$650,000 Picasso painting.

Scott, aged 67, who pleaded guilty just before the jury at Snaresbrook crown court, east London, was due to consider its verdict last week.

He was visibly relieved on hearing his fate. He had earlier told reporters he expected up to six years.

But Judge Andrew Brooks, renowned as a heavy sentence, was stern in his reproval. Sentencing Scott and his accomplice, Ronald Spring, aged 70, a former lawyer who received a two-year sentence suspended for 24 months, he said their crime was so "grave and serious" there was no alternative to a custodial sentence. He added that Scott had been "very close" to the source of the robbery.

"You must have planned the precise steps of how you were going to dispose of this valuable painting," he said.

At the trial the court heard how Scott, who has served 12 years and netted an estimated \$30 million during a criminal career dating from 1950, passed the abstract painting, *Tête de Femme* on to Spring after it was taken in an armed robbery at the Lefevre Gallery in Mayfair, west London, in March last year.

Giving evidence, Scott, who initially denied conspiring to handle the painting, claimed that the robber, who cannot be named for legal reasons, had given him a case containing it but had not told him it was stolen.

"Your part was to provide an outlet in this robbery, and in a sense you were indirectly encouraging the robbery to take place."

At the trial the court heard how Scott, who has served 12 years and netted an estimated \$30 million during a criminal career dating from 1950, passed the abstract painting, *Tête de Femme* on to Spring after it was taken in an armed robbery at the Lefevre Gallery in Mayfair, west London, in March last year.

During the trial, Detective Constable Andrew Kennedy said Scott had been driven by his thirst for notoriety. "I think he revels in infamy. He's a likeable rogue, but... he is still someone who has committed... very serious crimes throughout his life."

Witnesses at the 12-day trial described how Mrs Watts had coped with her daughter's problems with "amazing fortitude".

The court heard that Mrs Watts herself raised the alarm after discovering Abigail's tracheotomy tube had become detached. The prosecution claimed that she had untied the tapes which held the tube in place.

Abigail died in July 1995 in the Royal Manchester children's hospital. She had suffered a heart attack within minutes of birth. She was brain damaged, partially sighted, deaf and could not breathe or feed without help.

She shouted in court: "You don't know what you have done to me, you really don't." She explained later that she meant the case should never

have come to court. "No one could ever imagine what we have been through and how much our lives have been destroyed."

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David Ward

**A** WOMAN described as a devoted and loving mother was yesterday cleared by the Court of Appeal of killing her 14-month-old severely handicapped daughter, who died five days after a breathing tube became detached from her throat.

Julie Watts, aged 32, of Bolton, Greater Manchester, was cleared of murder but convicted of manslaughter last September. She was given an 18-month jail sentence suspended for two years.

Yesterday three judges ruled that the conviction was unsafe and said the trial judge Mr Justice Sachs had given the jury inadequate direction on manslaughter

through gross negligence. Mrs Watts, a former psychiatric nurse who has two other children, sobbed uncontrollably as Lord Justice Swinton, Mr Justice Connell and Mr Justice Poole quashed her conviction.

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**Oxford and Cambridge cannot become the meritocracies that we need them to be for Britain to complete its modernisation, if state-educated students refuse to go there to transform the academic and social culture.**

Linda Grant

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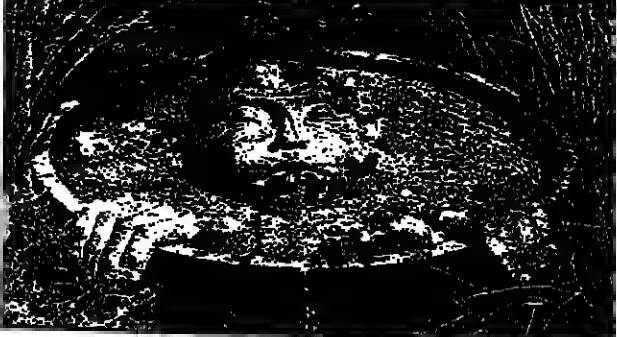
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The Guardian Tuesday May 19 1998

BRITAIN 5



# Scent of change in Chelsea tradition

John Vidal at UK's premier flower show

THE English bloom, all cream, white and willowy, fluttered in the Chelsea breeze, throwing dappled shadows across Coco Chanel's imaginary garden. "Like this!" asked the model trying to pose like a camellia in front of a gold statue. "Charmante, merci infiniment," cooed a French businesswoman as the cameras whirled.

Something odd is happening at the Chelsea Flower Show. A rum bunch of international perfumers, fashion houses, designers and corporations is moving in on the British institution that has been one of the last refuges of London snobs.

The locals, not invited to Karl Lagerfeld's opening supper or to Givenchy's, are none too happy at the triumph of style over substance. "It's not the same. It's got nothing to do with gardening, has it?" said one hardcore hooray to another under the nose of two surprised-looking lead lions — for sale at £40,000 the pair.

"Too many women nowadays, too much hoi polloi," sniffed his friend. "I hate to say it, but they just don't buy any more."

The women and hoi polloi could be forgiven, given the price of a class garden these days.

There is a Spanish pot going for £20,000 (well, it did take one man one year to make), heraldic beasts for £31,000 each and sundials for £10,000. A woman from America had just sold a conservatory for £330,000 to a Belgian.

Last year's Chelsea buzzword was "cool" because of the post-election weather. This year the talk is of "contemplation and reflection", which means really cool gardens should be full of mirrors, glass and water and ideally incinda £100,000 private chapels.

The shift in style could be good news for garden gnomes, considered so uncool by the Royal Horticultural Society that they have always been unofficially banned from the premier garden event. One reportedly made a subversive appearance yesterday but was whisked away. The closest Chelsea gets to gnomery are marble figures called "Winter" or "Persephone", snips at £15,000.

With New Labour and its friends pointedly staying away from the instant Scottish glens, corpses of bonsai trees and displays by the Carnivorous Plant Society, producers of Bean and Four Weddings and A Funeral. On the other is Mary Queen of Scots, the subject of a £12 million-£15 million BBC film, the corporation's most expensive feature film.

Elizabeth is set for release in the autumn, while Mary Queen of Scots is due to begin filming at the end of the year in Scotland. Announcing Mary in Cannes yesterday, David Thompson, head of BBC films, said: "Elizabeth is a court-based drama. Our film is not a costume drama, it is about a warrior queen."

But Tim Bevan, co-head of Working Title, said: "The idea is very similar to ours, but we got in first so hopefully it won't damage us."

While Elizabeth inherits a country wracked by religious conflicts and resists conspiracies and assassination attempts to emerge as a powerful monarch, Mary Queen of Scots is being billed as "Braveheart for girls".

The film has been written by acclaimed scriptwriter Jimmy McGovern, who wrote the television drama Hillsborough. Announcing Mary Queen of Scots, Mr Thompson said: "It is a story of lust, power and intrigue, and it deals with her private life in a very direct way. It deals with her relations and her affairs when she was 20."

Although the film has yet to be cast and no director has been named, the BBC is in discussion with American partners to finance the film, and will be considering British, American and French actresses for the part.

"It doesn't feel like a period drama," said Mr Thompson. "She is a ruthless character. There is bed and battles and sometimes battles in bed."

The film, which will be shot at the end of the year in Scotland, for probable release next year, marks a departure for BBC Films. It is more than twice as expensive than any other film made by the BBC.

"Traditionally our policy has involved low budget films," said Mr Thompson. "Now we will start investing in large industry braces itself for a jump in production over the coming year. Much of it will be due to the first results of lottery-funded film franchises, but many of the applicants who failed to win the franchise a year ago have since been active as producers."

Mr Thompson also announced that the BBC is looking at making a Dr Who feature film.

Despite attempts by various producers to film the cult television series in the past, the BBC is not deterred by the sometimes disastrous results.

There is, however, a problem. The BBC does not own the rights to the Daleks. A previous BBC attempt to film Dr Who floundered when negotiations broke down over the price for the rights to the Daleks.

## Cannes Festival

# BBC banks on warrior queen in film

Dan Gledhill in Cannes

IT COULD, but probably should not, be billed as the battle of the queens. On one side is the young Elizabeth, embodied by Cate Blanchett in a forthcoming film made by Working Title, producers of Bean and Four Weddings and A Funeral. On the other is Mary Queen of Scots, the subject of a £12 million-£15 million BBC film, the corporation's most expensive feature film.

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Bruce Willis with Liv Tyler yesterday in Cannes. His film Armageddon failed to impress PHOTOGRAPH: REMY de la MALVIERE



The accent on style this year penetrates the flower show even to these vegetables from Devon

# Radioactive gas from ground linked to cancer

Sarah Bosley Health Correspondent

RADIOACTIVE radon gas, which seeps out of the ground and into homes in some parts of the country, is responsible for about one in twenty deaths from lung cancer, scientists have established.

The whole of Cornwall, Devon and parts of Somerset, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire are the worst affected by radon, which occurs naturally in the earth's crust as part of the decay chain of the commonest uranium isotope. Out of doors, most of its effects are dispersed in the air, but concentrations build up in houses that are not sealed against it.

The latest research suggests that about 50,000 people are living in homes with unsafe radon levels.

It was known that miners digging for uranium in Czechoslovakia and East Germany in the 1960s and 1980s had a high risk of developing cancer.

The new study by the ICRF (Imperial Cancer Research Fund) epidemiology unit at Oxford University has provided the first direct evidence of radon's potentially lethal effects in the home.

The scientists, whose work is published in the latest issue of the British Journal of Cancer today, contacted people who had lived for a long time in the South-west and been referred to the five hospitals in Devon and Corn-

well where cancers are treated. Radon detectors were placed in the bedroom and sitting room of those who consented for six months.

People who have lived for a long time in houses where radon concentrations are at the level where action is recommended in the UK (200 becquerels per cubic metre) have lung cancer rates about 20 per cent higher than the rest of the population, they found. Those with double that concentration (400 becquerels per cubic metre) have lung cancer rates of 40 per cent higher.

Sarah Darby, one of the scientists heading the study, said: "Some individuals are certainly receiving doses of radon which would be unacceptable and illegal if they were workers in the nuclear industry."

People living in areas with higher than recommended radon levels are advised to have their homes fitted with pumps to renew the air and seals to stop radon gas getting in.

Local authority grants are usually available for the work, which costs between £500 and £1,000. There are thought to be around 50,000 people in the UK whose homes exceed the UK Action Level.

Sir Richard Doll, who took part in the study, said: "Most radon-induced lung cancers are produced in conjunction with cigarette smoking and, in the absence of smoking, the number produced would be much smaller."

# Woman who lost leg wins £280,000 from M & S

Stewart Miller

MARKS and Spencer was yesterday ordered to pay almost £280,000 in damages to a former sales assistant whose leg had to be amputated after she suffered an apparently minor injury while loading a freezer cabinet.

Karen Gower, now aged 28, suffered little more than a knock when a metal grille struck her left shin at the company's Felixstowe store in September 1991, the High Court was told.

But the accident triggered a medical condition known as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy. As a result, what started merely as "swelling and bruising with no bony injury" developed into an agonising deformity of her leg.

Doctors decided to amputate Ms Gower's left leg above the knee in July 1994, the court heard.

While on crutches after the operation, she fell and struck her right knee, prompting the onset of the rheumatological condition in her right foot, which is now dangerously swollen.

Delivering his judgment yesterday, Judge Nigel Baker QC, said her prognosis was "not good" as doctors cannot rule out the amputation of Ms Gower's right foot as well.

Marks and Spencer admitted liability for the accident, but the judge dismissed claims by the company's insurers that it was "inconceivable" Ms Gower's devastating condition could be connected to such a trivial injury. However, while he accepted the accident had triggered RSD, he also ruled there was a 40 per cent chance she would have developed it in any event. Her damages were therefore reduced from £468,000 to £278,641, though the judge left the door open for her to seek further damages if the condition worsens.

He said Ms Gower had suffered health problems for two years before the accident, and there had been signs she was under "considerable stress", which doctors believe prompts the onset of RSD.

Last night Ms Gower said: "Obviously I would rather not have gone through any of this, even though it is a lot of money. But I don't think it is enough money for all the pain I have gone through." She suffers phantom limb pain and needs frequent doses of morphine elixir to reduce it.

Colin Natali, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the Royal London hospital, said: "In one sense she is one of the lucky ones. There are a lot of people who may not lose limbs, but who develop RSD and have to live with an awful lot of pain. They get nothing."

A Marks and Spencer spokeswoman said: "We have every sympathy with this young lady. We deeply regret the accident and we have admitted liability all along."

Jane Tadmor, of the Arthritis Research Campaign, welcomed the ruling and said: "This is an extreme case, but anything which recognises that it [RSD] is a genuine medical condition must be a good thing."



Karen Gower, aged 28, who developed Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, arrives at the High Court PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES HORTON

**The Mafia's fearsome empire is showing unmistakable signs of decline and their grip over New York's criminal world is dissipating.**

Edward Helmore

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## 6 WORLD NEWS

Wife of Paris mayor is held by police as evidence mounts of illicit funding at the Gaullist town hall

# Sleaze inquiry threat to Chirac

Jon Henley in Paris

**T**HE wife of the mayor of Paris was remanded in police custody yesterday as evidence mounted of a decades-long pattern of sleaze, kickbacks and illicit party funding at the town hall that was run for 16 years by President Jacques Chirac.

Xavière Tiberi, the wife of Jean Tiberi, the loyal Gaullist chosen by Mr Chirac to succeed him as mayor when he was elected president in 1985, has been under formal investigation for more than a year. The investigation centres on

a payment of £21,000 made to her by a local authority near Paris run by one of her husband's political allies. The only work she seems to have performed to justify the payment was to produce a 56-page report entitled *Reflections on the Council of Economic and Social Cooperation*, which was largely copied from a book and was riddled with spelling mistakes. The investigation into the apparent kickback is one of many into alleged corruption

at Paris town hall, a long-standing stronghold of Mr Chirac's embattled Gaullist RPR party. But the stakes were raised sharply yesterday with allegations in a Paris paper that for the first time threaten to rebound directly on the president. Le Parisien said it had obtained a 74-page list of town hall employees in 1985, when Mr Chirac was mayor, which showed that among those paid annual salaries of £25,000-£35,000 were 245 people hired directly by his office without having had to pass public service exams. They included the son of an unnamed presidential candidate, the niece of a former prime minister, the son of a justice minister, the wife of a provincial MP, several defeated RPR politicians and the former president of the chamber of agriculture of Corrèze, Mr Chirac's constituency.

Only 45 of the alleged political hirings were listed in the town hall phone book, the paper said, leaving some 200 who were on the payroll but apparently had neither a telephone, an office or a secretary. "There were also RPR party workers," Georges Quémar, a former head of personnel at the town hall, told the paper. "They had a real job at party headquarters, but were paid by the town hall. They included poster-stickers but also party officials. And then there were the 'buddies': writers, poets, ballet dancers." Mr Quémar said the payroll was at that stage controlled by Mr Tiberi, then deputy mayor in charge of personnel, and that the alleged non-exis-



Xavière Tiberi, the wife of the mayor of Paris, is escorted from her flat in the capital yesterday by two plainclothes policemen, and (below) Jacques Chirac in the happier days of his successful presidential campaign in 1995

tent jobs cost Paris ratepayers between \$800,000 and \$1 million a year. The revelations could not have been worse timed for the RPR, in disarray since suffering heavy losses in the snap general election last year, and after its poor showing in regional elections two months ago. Mr Tiberi is fighting for his political life in the face of a rebellion within the town council led by a former justice minister, Jacques Toubon. The mayor, who has overcome allegations of vote-rigging in the 1997 general election, is also the focus of corruption inquiries over claims that the party received

illicit funding through kickbacks on dozens of public housing contracts, and that council flats were let to political associates and relatives at knock-down rents. An earlier investigation into Mrs Tiberi's case was dropped last year on a technicality, but it was reopened as part of an investigation into Xavier Dugoin, the former RPR council president who commissioned her report. Mrs Tiberi has made no secret of her view that she and her husband have been left in the lurch by top RPR officials. One senior party member, who asked not to be named, said that what she might tell investigators in her defence was "enough to put the party into a cold sweat".



PHOTOGRAPHS: GAIL CORNIER/JACQUES DEMARTHON

## Russia radar base in Cyprus alarms West

Chris Drake in Nicosia and Richard Norton-Taylor

**T**HE Russian S-300 missile system due for delivery to Cyprus in the coming months would provide Moscow's intelligence chiefs with top-secret information on military aircraft movements in the region, including monitoring all flights in and out of Britain's base on the island at RAF Akrotiri. Defence experts say it is this fear that is driving frantic Western efforts to get the order cancelled, and not the ostensible argument that the missiles could trigger a war between the Nato allies Greece and Turkey.

The reason for the concern is the powerful "Tomahawk" radar which forms part of the system. With a range of 200 miles, it would illuminate Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Jordan. Britain has its own radar station in Cyprus on Mount Olympus, but even with updated equipment the Russian version is superior. And since it will be operated by at least 70 Russian experts, Britain and the United States fear Moscow will be able to collect information that is highly valuable to Russia's Middle East allies: Syria, Iraq and perhaps Iran.

A military expert said: "Satellites are fine for watching immovable objects. This Russian system would wreck the West's current exclusive monitoring which keeps everything cosy between them, Turkey, Israel and their other allies in the region, including those in the Gulf."

"It would certainly be very dangerous and, given the multiple secret operations for which RAF Akrotiri is used, it doesn't take a genius to see why Britain is so worried." In London, Whitehall downplayed the significance of the Russian radar system, insisting that Britain was concerned about the missiles and the impact on what one official called "the security of Cyprus and the Mediterranean area".

Akrotiri, Britain's highest overseas military air base, is a key staging post for operations in the Middle East, the Gulf, Africa and eastern Europe. The climate makes it ideal for training and the US uses it for its US spy jets, to monitor the 1989 Camp David peace accord between Israel and Egypt. At a cost of \$400 million, Cyprus has ordered the system with two batteries of missiles, but the US calculates that 12 Turkish warplanes could wipe out the 40 missiles in a 10-minute operation. Of the 12 aircraft, they could expect to have one shot down, but even that would be the result of the Cypriots firing an Italian-made short-range missile rather than an S-300.

Turkey has threatened to destroy the system either while it is being delivered or soon after, and it was always assumed the missiles presented the problem for Turkey. But, given their relative ineffectiveness in the event of renewed hostilities between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the north, the radar's power is a much greater menace.

Cyprus claims the system is purely for defensive purposes in the event of a Turkish attack. Privately, ministers acknowledged the missiles were ordered to focus international attention and so help break the deadlock in the reunification talks.

Mr Clerides had said he would cancel the missiles if there were progress on the Cyprus problem. Britain and the US are leading attempts to present him with a face-saving way out, with hopes pinned on finding a way to appease Turkey at next month's European Union summit in Cardiff.

## 'Stakeholders' get voice in trade deal

Martin Walker European Editor

**P**RESIDENT Bill Clinton and Tony Blair took a giant step towards ending the long transatlantic row over United States trade sanctions yesterday, and declared themselves committed to bringing environmental and trade unionist "stakeholders" into negotiations on further trade liberalisation. "We agreed new steps to dismantle unilateral and multilateral trade barriers on manufacturing, services and agriculture, while maintaining the highest standards for labour and the environment," Mr Clinton said, announcing a new "transatlantic economic partnership" which officials claimed could boost US trade with the European Union by \$100 billion a year. "This is an effort to give a voice to all the stakeholders, environmental and labour, and other elements of civil society, in a new paradigm that ought to be mirrored in trade negotiations around the world," Mr Clinton added. He was to repeat the stakeholder theme last night in Geneva, in a speech at celebrations marking 50 years of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), insisting public opinion in the US would turn against free-trade pacts "unless the American people think them consistent with their standards on labour rights and the environment". The new transatlantic agreement was reached in

**'This is an effort to give a say to all the elements of civil society'**

time it had been put into the context of world trade, and represents the first international fruit of the Clinton-Blair ideological relationship. "This is something Tony Blair and I think we ought to be doing," Mr Clinton said yesterday. "We agree that we don't exist as economic animals alone, and if we don't include these broader issues of human rights, labour rights and the environment, our trade policies will prove self-defeating." Mr Blair said the two men had also "avoided a showdown over sanctions". European business is incensed at the long-standing threat of penalties — under the US Helms-Burton Act — against foreign firms investing in Cu-

ban property nationalised by Fidel Castro.

It is also angry about the Iran Libya Sanctions Act passed by a Republican-dominated Congress in 1996. This requires the president to impose penalties on firms that invest more than \$20 million (\$12.5 million) a year in the oil and gas sectors of those two countries, which are suspected of sponsoring terrorism.

Under yesterday's compromise, Mr Clinton agreed to waive penalties over Cuba, and Europe accepted the US case that many of the Castro nationalisations were illegal under international law.

That admission by the EU, and promises to increase its co-operation and intelligence sharing to stop dangerous technology from reaching states suspected of sponsoring terrorism, were aimed at winning over the anti-Castro and anti-Tehran hawks of the US Congress and finally ending the bruising sanctions row.

President Clinton also agreed to waive sanctions against the French oil group Total for its new investments in Iran. This gives the green light to Shell and BP to proceed with their own oil development projects in Iran. Jacques Santer, the EU Commission President, who was part of the London negotiations, said more work was needed to complete the agreement, but Mr Blair said Washington and Brussels now had the basis for a lasting solution. The US Congress will have to approve the deal.

Leader comment, page 9

## News in brief Army 'linked to plane crash'

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said yesterday it had new information linking the military to the 1986 plane crash that killed Mozambique's President Samora Machel. It said Russian experts had concluded that the Soviet-made plane had received a decoy signal that was stronger than a signal from the mountains, killing all 34 people on board. — AP.

**Chile's smog crisis** More than 550,000 vehicles were ordered to stay off Santiago's streets and 942 factories closed as authorities combated a sudden increase in air pollution. — AP.

**Police seize Viagra** Egyptian police raided chemists to confiscate illegally imported bottles of the impotence drug Viagra. Health officials have ordered clinical tests of the drug before they approve its sale. — AP.

**Baby buried alive** A woman jogging in California found a partially buried day-old baby along the path. The infant is being treated for severe hypothermia. "He opened his eyes and he grabbed my wrist and he would not let go," the jogger said. — AP.

**Othello choked** After knocking out Desdemona, breaking his hand in a fencing match and slapping his leading lady so hard she stomped off the stage, the Othello of Jerusalem's Haifa Municipal Theatre has been suspended. The theatre says the accidents were due to Giuliano Mar's "total immersion in his acting". — AP.

## Schröder unfit to be chancellor, says Kohl

Ian Traynor in Bremen reports on the German leader's scornful attack on his challenger's Blairite 'New Centre' rallying cry

**C**HANCELLOR Helmut Kohl sought to resurrect his prospects of hanging on to power yesterday by raising the spectre of the red menace running a rudderless Germany should he lose the general election in four months' time. In an address to a special congress of his ruling Christian Democrats in the northern city of Bremen, Mr Kohl delivered his first strong personal attack on his challenger, Gerhard Schröder, and described the prospect of a Social Democrat-led government as a "scandal" that would pave "the way to a left-wing republic".

Fighting what he called "one of the toughest election campaigns" of post-war Germany, Mr Kohl said the country faced a choice in September between two "fundamental political directions", seeking to undermine Mr Schröder's appeal as a man of the centre. Mr Kohl, aged 68, is trailing Mr Schröder, aged 54, by eight points in the polls. His two-hour speech had been keenly awaited by a dispirited party faithful. The 1,000 delegates gave him a rapturous, 10-minute standing ovation. The challenger's strategy

is based on a Blairite rallying cry to the "New Centre". Mr Kohl heaped scorn on the claim and tried to sway the millions of don't-knows by arguing that Mr Schröder would form a left-wing coalition with the Greens with the former east German communists "on the horizon". "It is not the New Centre, but the Old Left spruced up," he said. Mr Schröder would reveal his true, socialist colours once in power. The result would be "uncertainty, instability and a loss of the world's confidence in foreign and security policy".

The chancellor called for tax, welfare and pension reforms and wage restraint to combat mass unemployment, but there were no new policy proposals. He projected himself as a safe pair of hands at the helm, and choked with emotion as he rhapsodised about Europe, the single currency and what he called the banishment of the threat of war from the continent. "We're now living through European unification... Dreams are becoming reality," Mr Kohl said. But his four d'horizon of 16 years in power, in an occasionally rambling delivery, and his attempt to paint Mr

Schröder in the far-left corner, sounded anachronistic, reminiscent of the ideological battles of the 1980s. Some commentators saw the speech as over-nostalgic and as a political testament. "I didn't think we had already lost the election," said Matthias Wissman, the transport minister and Kohl campaign strategist. "Everyone knows that Kohl can always perform the impossible."

But according to weekend opinion polls, only 14 per cent expect Mr Kohl to win, with most supporters for the first time believing they will lose (56 per cent). Only one in four voters want Mr Kohl to remain chancellor, while two-thirds prefer Mr Schröder. Even among CDU supporters, only 69 per cent want Mr Kohl to stay on as chancellor. Mr Schröder had equivocated on the three fundamental issues of the past 15 years that "changed Germany and the world". Mr Kohl said. He listed Nato's twin-track decisions of the 1980s to deploy nuclear missiles in Germany while negotiating arms cuts with Moscow; unification in 1989-90; and the euro. The challenger, declared Mr Kohl, "is not fit to become chancellor of reunited Germany".

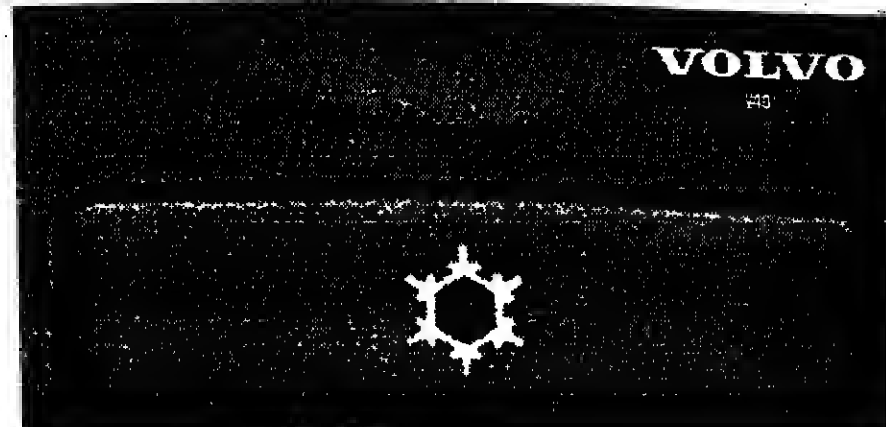
"Helmut Kohl is yesterday's man," responded Franz Müntefering, the Social Democrats' campaign manager. "That was Kohl's penultimate speech as CDU chairman. Kohl has wasted his last chance."

Man to be

Arafat mo

Desperate

THE COOLEST PLACES TO BE THIS SUMMER. LISBON, HAVANA AND INSIDE THE VOLVO V40.





Russia  
radar  
base in  
Cyprus  
alarms  
West



Orthodox Jews cover their faces at the scene in West Jerusalem where a 51-year-old Palestinian was murdered last week, the sixth and most recent victim of the 'serial stabber' who has been branded an outcast by rabbis. A Palestinian in the foreground (above) is watching Israeli police examining the body (below)

## Man in black brings murder to heart of Jerusalem ghetto

In the littered, secretive alleys of Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox district, somebody is stabbing Arab workers. **Julian Borger** follows the hunt for this 'traitor'

SOMETHING has gone murderously wrong in Mea Shearim. For generations, to enter the walled Jerusalem ghetto, bustling with ultra-Orthodox Jews in black frock coats and fur hats, their every act prescribed by the Torah.

The thick stone walls and iron gates were meant to be a bastion against mortal sin, but now they conceal their own lethal secret. Somewhere in Mea Shearim's dense labyrinth of alleyways, a killer is on the loose. Dubbed the 'Serial Stabber' in the local press, a bearded man in the garb of a *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox Jew) has knifed six Arab workers in the past three months. Each attack has been more vicious than the last, culminating in the murder of Khayri Alkham, a 51-year-old labourer, last Wednesday.

The attacks have not only fuelled a cycle of violent retribution (in which several Jewish students have been attacked in Jerusalem's Old City) at a time when the peace process is balanced on a knife-edge. They also threaten to prise open a community which the Israeli author Amos Elon described as "a medieval world of poverty and unbroken faith".

The rabbis of Mea Shearim are so alarmed by the attacks that they have issued a decree denouncing the murderer as *din rodef* — an outcast fit to be surrendered to the secular authorities. Vigilante patrols

of young *haredi* men have been formed with orders to track the killer down in the cramped, littered streets of the district, with its 20,000 residents.

Each of the Mea Shearim attacks has been remarkably similar. A nine-inch commando knife was used and left embedded in the victim, or lying nearby. In at least one case the knife was inscribed with the name of a French Jew murdered in Jerusalem in February, suggesting a sectarian reprisal.

The first Mea Shearim victim was an Arab errand-boy, aged 14, who worked for a Jewish grocery. He was stabbed in the back. The following five attacks all took place within the same 100-yard radius, and yet the police appear to have made no progress. The surviving victims attribute the authorities' failure to a lack of interest.

Neshad Salah, aged 38, a Palestinian from East Jerusalem, survived an attack on May 7 by pulling the knife out of his back himself, and running to the Mea Shearim hospital where he worked. Recuperating at home yesterday, he said he had given investigators a description of his attacker — a young, strong man with the dark clothes, hat and beard of an ultra-Orthodox Jew. But, he said, "it seems the police are not serious... Jews are treated differently."

A police spokeswoman gave a terse response yesterday, saying only: "The police expect to carry out a successful investigation despite the difficulties."

These "difficulties" are well known in Jerusalem. The *haredi* community will have nothing to do with the secular authorities, who are regarded as profane by most ultra-Orthodox rabbis. They believe a Jewish state should come into existence only after the arrival of the messiah. A group of Mea Shearim fundamentalists tried to defect to the Arab side during the 1948 war and were prevented from crossing the lines only by the threat of execution.

Even today there is no police station in the district. Detectives who tried to interview a potential witness by entering a *yeshiva* (religious college) disguised as ultra-Orthodox students were quickly discovered and ejected.

"People are not that easily fooled," Rabbi Henri Kahn, a community leader, said. "We solve our own problems inside these walls. Nothing seeps into the outside world." Local leaders claim there has never been a murder in Mea Shearim's 124-year history; the Jerusalem police confirmed they had none on record. The sanctity placed on human life by the Torah is absolute, Rabbi Kahn said, and the killer must either be an outsider disguised as an ultra-Orthodox, or a madman.

"He is putting at risk the lives of the local population — a population which is pacifist," the rabbi said. So the *din rodef* was declared by Mea Shearim's religious court, the first such decree in living memory, stigmatising the murderer as a traitor.

Meshi Zahav, Mea Shearim's "operations officer", has been put in charge of hunting the outlaw. An unlikely looking detective in black skullcap, grey beard and sidecurls, Mr Zahav has deployed patrols of *haredi* youths ready to "follow the words of the rabbis through water and through fire" to gather information.



come in from the community, but I can't go into details," he said. He acknowledged that the killer had been dressed in the black sult and hat of the ultra-Orthodox, but insisted: "It is someone who has come among us to commit these acts. We are extremists when it comes to religious values."

One possibility, Mr Zahav conceded, was that the murderer might be a newly-arrived ultra-Orthodox immigrant. At least one of the knives used was inscribed with the name David Coriza, who arrived three years ago from Marseille and was killed by persons unknown as he opened his local synagogue on a cold February morning.

But Coriza's widow and surviving relatives have yet to be interviewed by the Jerusalem police.

Evidence is beginning to

## Sierra Leone rebels inflict random terror

Vicious attacks by vanquished soldiers are to scupper peace, **Gary Younge** in Makeni writes

THE rebels came for Kulo Korban on Saturday night. They left him with a letter and took away three of his fingers and both ears.

"I was asleep when I heard a knock on the door. Then four men kicked it down and dragged me away. They tied me to a pole and said, 'Today is your last day'. Then they just started chopping with machetes and cutlasses all around my head and arms."

The note was addressed to the Nigerian-led West African military force Ecomog and demanded its immediate withdrawal from the area.

Mr Korban, a mechanic aged 20, is sitting in the outpatients' wing of the Makeni hospital dripping blood into a bowl on the floor while doctors sew up the stumps of his fingers. On the right side of his head fresh lint covers the wound where his ear used to be. On the left there is little more than a lobe and a deep red gash.

They have not seen a gunshot wound at Makeni hospital for weeks. Just the steady flow of amputees, mutilated by soldiers of the former junta, coming from villages as close as eight miles away. Some are aged under five, others are more than 60.

There was Mohammed Mustapha, a building contractor, aged 55, who lost his hand, his ears and his 15-year-old daughter Aminata, who was taken away by a rebel soldier claiming to know Mohammed.

And Awakale, a mother of six, who walked four miles with her left arm hanging off after a man posing as an imam rounded up people from her village

and started backing at them. Relief workers tell stories of gang rapes, people burned alive and fathers mutilated because they refused to rape their daughters. Survivors say many are still hiding in the bush and others have been killed.

They are the daily tales of brutality at the hands of rebels who know they can not win the war but hope to scupper any hopes of a lasting peace indefinitely by unleashing violence as random in its choice of victims as it is vicious in its execution.

Makeni, a small town in central Sierra Leone, is where the leaders of the former junta fled when they were ousted from the capital, Freetown, in February.

"When they came they thought it was like a carnival," said Mahmud Hassan, owner of the Flamingo nightclub who sent his children into the bush soon after the rebels arrived. "They started shooting their AK-47s all over the place. Then they broke into the nightclub and took all the cold drinks from the freezer and started dancing. We called it 'Operation Help Yourself'."

A few days later Makeni, which lies a few miles from the home town of the rebel leader Johnny Paul Koroma, was recaptured by Ecomog. It is now surrounded by small gangs of troops loyal to Mr Koroma who are launching hit and run attacks on small villages.

Dr Baker, who runs Makeni Hospital, treated many rebel soldiers when the junta took over the town. Now the same people he nursed back to health are threatening to mutilate him. He is considering leaving town.

"They keep on sending me letters saying they are going to kill me. Once a man even came here and asked for me by name but because he didn't know what I looked like I told him that Dr Baker 'had gone'," he said.

"But others know me. Even here", he gestured to the 100 or so people in the hospital courtyard. "They have their spies who are telling them everything we are doing."

## Arafat meets Albright in London

ian Black  
Diplomatic Editor

THE United States said last night there was no breakthrough in the Middle East peace talks after the secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, held a surprise meeting with the Palestinian Authority president, Yasser Arafat.

US officials insisted no dramatic movement had been anticipated at the London talks and that Washington would continue its efforts to salvage the peace process.

In Jerusalem the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, denied reports that he had agreed to a US proposal to hand over a further 13 per cent of the occupied West Bank to Palestinian rule in exchange for a clampdown on Islamic militants.

A US official said: "Netanyahu put forward some constructive ideas on how to move on the interim issues. He hasn't agreed to our package but he has some ideas which merited working on. But there are still gaps."

Mr Arafat sounded pessimistic after a meeting with Tony Blair at Downing Street. "Unfortunately, Mr Netanyahu has not offered anything tangible to Mrs Albright," he said.

Earlier in Oslo, Mr Arafat accused Mr Netanyahu of obstructing the negotiations.

President Clinton, also in London for the US summit with the European Union, said: "We have our hopes, but I think it is important not to raise false hopes or to characterise the talks at this time. They are in a period where anything we say publicly will increase the chances that we will fail."

Mrs Albright was flying to Geneva last night to brief Mr Clinton on the state of the deadlocked negotiations.

Though high, as prices go, \$2.7 million is not unusual. After her death, Jackie Onassis's Fifth Avenue apartment fetched \$5.9 million.

Future buyers might be interested to know Madonna's flat also boasts a hair-dressing salon, a sound-proof gym and a sauna, which can take up to 12 people at a time.

## Desperately seeking New York flat



Madonna: Her interest is raising the stakes in Manhattan neighbourhoods

FOR the past few months sightings of Madonna around Manhattan have taken on a special significance with estate agents. The singer has been looking for a new apartment in which to hole up with her daughter Lourdes, and a flicker of interest from her was enough to stick three more months on the asking price of an individual property.

When her assistant was sent to check out a five-storey town house in Carnegie Hill last month, the hitherto stuffy Upper East Side was suddenly the place to live. When the star was spotted lingering in person on several occasions, pen thoughtfully in mouth, outside an empty 6,000 sq ft

loft on Duane Street, SoHo was instantly back as the hip place to be.

And when it was discovered she'd been poking around John McKroe's triplex at the majestic Beresford building up in the West Eighties — where Jerry Seinfeld has just bought a vast \$5 million duplex with extra garaging for three of his 25 classic Porsches — people promptly declared the Upper West Side back in fashion.

But her search for the perfect flat has come to a sudden impasse, because the only offer she has received on her own apartment is thought to be \$625,000 less than the original asking price.

An amalgam of five apartments on the highly desirable strip Central Park West, Madonna's residence was initially placed on the market last year for \$4.3 million.

Among those who are thought to have toured the property but turned it down are the designer Donna Karan, the singer Mariah Carey and Lisa Marie Presley, who was said to be taken by the main kitchen, which is modelled on a 1950s diner, but then decided against the fifth-floor apartment.

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## Ministers tremble

Blair axe awaits

ALL IT takes is an early burst of good weather in London SW1 and the Westminster rumour mill goes into "July madness" mode. Speculation has duly resurfaced about a ministerial reshuffle ahead of next week's Whit recess, rather than just before the long summer break.

It has been our impression that Tony Blair's diary has been quite busy enough lately without the premature burden of a delicate re-ordering of his team, the first since his election victory, before his EU presidency is over and Ireland has (hopefully) voted for the peace process.

But the prime minister is often said to be a man in a hurry and the rumour mill is not always wrong. So what should he decide? To move at least three cabinet incumbents, David Clark, Harriet Harman and Gavin Strang, if the advice of that anonymous tipster, The Great Mentioner, is to be believed.

They are deemed to be the new team's conspicuous failures. But that judgment depends on where you sit. Dr Clark, for instance, has his defenders among ministers and MPs, possibly because his likely replacement will be Peter Mandelson, whom the premier has not yet persuaded his party to love.

When the time comes Mr Blair would do well to keep a surprise up his sleeve. It could, for example, be that he concentrates most of his effort on reshuffling the middle and lower ranks. Unlike William Hague, whose reshuffle is expected after Downing

Street has done its stuff, the prime minister does not have a problem at the top: most cabinet ministers have done better than their shadowy shadows. Remind us again, what is Andrew Mackay for exactly?

But a cull among junior ministers who have been tried and found wanting would encourage the others and give opportunities to young (and not-so-young) hopefuls. In politics that is not merely a matter of man/woman management or cosmetics. MPs travel in hope, nowadays in hope of wielding executive office, of ministerial Rover and red box.

Mr Blair will want to promote some of those disappointed (despite very specific promises) last time. Some in this category will, meanwhile, have found useful employment elsewhere as chairmen of important select committees. Giles Radice and Chris Mullin, for instance. John Major had a bad habit of "rewarding" select committee chairmen, compliant or dangerous, with a ministerial job.

That is one dodge Mr Blair should resist. Senior backbenchers are an under-rated career. But he will definitely want to promote a few of the sharp-edged Class of '97 newcomers. Their most intriguing sub-category is surely the ex-Kinnockites and Smithites who belatedly found their way to Westminster last year, the Charles Clarkes, Patricia Hewitts and (were she not a committee chair), Margaret Hodge.

MPs will be watching what happens to them and to the highlighting "teenagers" who need no media tipster to impede their meteoric rise. They will also be watching the balance between Blairite and (Gordon) Brownite proteges, though more will be made of that than is probably warranted unless The Great Mentioner's most reckless whisper, the heave-ho for chief whip, Nick (No Relation) Brown, is proved true. That

would amount to blood in the Treasury gutters and will not happen.

Mr Blair has one more calculation to take into account. As yesterday's proposed rules changes on the deselection of MPs underlines, some off-message MPs are jittery about the pace of change and what they fear is a centralising tendency. A confident gesture towards the Awkward Squad would be appreciated.

## Cuba cop-out

Clinton appeases his hawks

FIDEL Castro applauded Hillary Clinton last week at a World Health Organisation meeting in Geneva when she spoke on making health services accessible to all. He had less reason last night to welcome her husband's speech to the World Trade Organisation: here is yet another US president who evangelises in favour of free trade, but excludes Cuba from its benefits.

Yet before flying to Geneva, Bill Clinton had just reached an important agreement with the EU on avoiding economic sanctions with foreign companies doing business with states - including Cuba - regarded by the US as "outlaw regimes". The agreement is loosely worded and the EU appears to accept Washington's grudge against Cuban expropriation of US assets after the 1959 revolution. But existing investments are excluded, and it should lead to long overdue weakening of sanctions.

A State Department sanctions team set up earlier this year has a raft of unilateral measures to review, but Iran is top of the agenda. Washington has been slower than Europe to recognise that a new chapter of relations with the west may have been opened by the election of President Moham-

mad Khatemi. Britain too has been constrained by the Salman Rushdie affair, although as we report today there is now discussion about sending a Foreign Office minister to Iran for the first time since the 1979 revolution. But US sanctions against the French-led foreign consortium now developing the Iranian South Pars oil field - averted by yesterday's deal - would be an embarrassment to Washington, only making it harder to move in the longer run towards US participation in that area.

Yesterday's agreements seek to balance new commitments from the EU against the granting of waivers by Mr Clinton that will ensure that sanctions are not imposed on European firms. The compromise will lean heavily on a new global registry of "confiscated property" which will warn off foreign companies from future dealings with businesses in other countries which have been nationalised or expropriated. This has the mark of a demonstrative anti-Cuba gesture designed to appease Congress. The EU's side-letter to the understanding only mentions Cuba, and accepts the US argument that most of the expropriations after the 1959 revolution were in violation of international law. It is hardly a principled statement, though it may be necessary to neutralise Congressmen who still cling to the cold war.

## Tax weekenders

The Webers would approve

YOU can imagine how the news would have gone down in Tresoddi, the second home retreat of Posh Simmonds's middle class cartoon characters in the Guardian in the 1980s: Stanhope Wright, the secretary-chasing, creative director of Beezeley &

Bullin Advertising would have been outraged as would Edmund Heep, the pub bore, but George Weber, the angst-ridden polytechnic lecturer and his liberal wife, Wendy, might have understood. A Liberal Democratic councillor in the Lake District has been promoting the idea of residents with second homes in the national park paying the full council tax rate, rather than the 50 per cent reduction guaranteed by the 1963 Local Government Finance Act. Stanhope and Heep would have argued that as second home-owners use less local services, they should pay lower taxes. George and Wendy would have been sympathetic to the housing problems facing residents in British beauty spots: even the price of the most modest cottages, boosted by the influx of metropolitan second homers, are far beyond the reach of many local first-time buyers.

Many villages are suffering a "generation gap" with local people aged between 20 and 30 forced out of the area because of soaring house prices. Making second home-owners pay the full council tax is unlikely to deter many, but it would raise an urgently-needed extra £1.7 million for the local Lake District community. Wales, which is more assertive about second homes, has never applied the 50 per cent reduction principle. Like Michael Heseltine, the Environment Secretary who introduced the concession, most second-homers could afford the full bill even if they aren't in the Heseltine league: a townhouse in Belgravia and country home near Banbury. A government which believes in redistribution would apply the principle nationwide. It would raise well over £100 million. Indeed, Labour promised as much in 1993, but that was before the party became committed to keeping Tresoddi weekenders inside the Labour tent.

## Letters to the Editor

### The word was Oppenheimer

PETER Preston asks: "Was Werner Von Braun a Hindu god?" (Big Bomb, big folly, May 18). No, he was a rocket engineer who worked on the Me 16, the world's first ballistic missile. After the war he worked on America's ICBMs and on the Saturn moon-rocket. However J Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the Manhattan project, and inventor of the A-bomb did quote the Hindu scriptures - "I have become Shiva, the destroyer of worlds" - when he watched the world's first nuclear test in New Mexico. Mike Diboll, London.

INDIA is conducting a series of nuclear tests. Pakistan may respond. Does this mean there will be Nuclear Test Match Special? With Richie Benaud describing how to make a neutron spin? Patrick Middleton, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

I WAS beginning to believe that no one could die who was not a saint. It is good to be able to regret the death of a roistering, hell-raising, possibly Mafia-connected, man of the people (OI Blue Eyes is dead, May 18). Val Smith, Coventry.

THE great producer, Sam Goldwyn is quoted as "A producer shouldn't get ulcers. He should give them." (May 15). Curiously, Sam Bronfman (no relation), a whiskey mogul, (May 16) has a similar philosophy. "I don't get ulcers, I give ulcers." Who should we believe? Sam Goldwyn, Sam Bronfman or the Guardian? Alan Naffarin, London.

SIMON Hoggart was at pains to point out how many foreigners were playing sides. A point might have been made had he not included the name Duberry. Michael Duberry is English and has played for England U-21s. Ed Allen, London.

SOMEONE tell Kenny Dalglish that Patrick Moore looks at stars as in astronomy (Weekend Sport, May 16) not to predict the future as claimed by astrology. M Lockyer, Street, Somerset.

## G8 scorns voice of pity

IT IS sad that Tony Blair was wrong to expect that Gordon Brown's proposals would lead to agreement on Third World debt (Fury at G8's debt 'failure', May 18). I fail to understand how the leaders could ignore the 70,000 demonstrators and not match the caring nature they show for the poor who pay for the inept work of politicians. Andrew Fring, Bradford.

IF, AS your leader suggests, the reasons for Third World debt are "still debated and not necessarily relevant to a solution", why has the Guardian's coverage persistently focused on corrupt regimes, military spending and flight capital? Major studies of debt conclude that these merely compounded a larger problem. There have been systemic causes of the debt and the World Bank and IMF are clearly implicated. The West is guilty of having erected an unsound basis for international trade and development, and of creating multi-lateral lending agencies that have wielded power without responsibility. Michael Rowbotham, Thurston, Norfolk.

CLARE Short may be proud that "Britain has taken the lead" (Short outlines five-

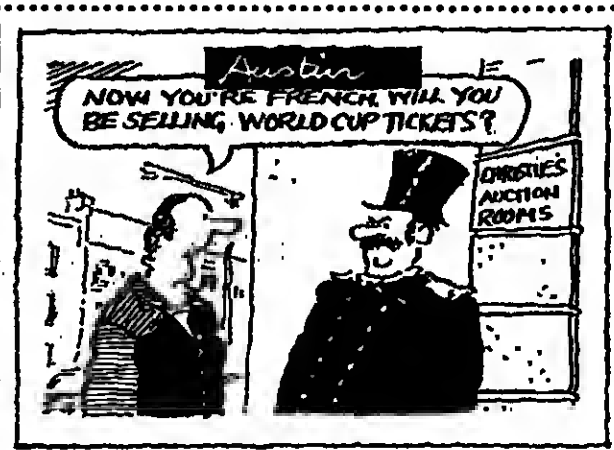
point package for debt relief payment, May 16) in finding resources to help eradicate malaria but she and Britain failed to persuade the industrial powers that malaria is a disease of the poor.

Get rid of Third World debt and you will improve the health of the developing world. The humbug that debt write-off will promote "moral hazard" has been used since the north entraped the south in poverty. Africa's debt can be written off without any hazard to the preservation of "northern civilisation". If the north wants to sell its goods to the south, it had better make sure people are physically and economically healthy enough to buy them. Dr Ray Bush, Director of African Studies Unit, University of Leeds.

THANK you for covering Jubilee 2000 so well. But given the numbers who made their feelings known and given the scale of the issue, it is staggering that so little coverage was forthcoming from other media. When a peaceful demonstration by "nice" people gets so little coverage one wonders why. The sad conclusion is that we weren't bad enough. Colin Darrington, Durham.

MISSED the Cup Final to join thousands in Birmingham to petition on behalf of the world's poor. My spiritual leader chose Wembley. Dr Carey's team won the cup but he has lost the plot? Rob Chapman, Willenhall, West Midlands.

IT IS typical of some politicians, and Clare Short seems to be one of them, to generalise world problems to such an extent that one finishes up feeling that it is all too vast, and does nothing (Short attacks Amnesty 'carping', May 15). Of course, all countries treat prisoners and violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but Amnesty International cannot take on all this. It concentrates on specifics. It is often successful. It sets a world climate of what you are supposed to do with dissidents and prisoners. As Albert Camus wrote, "despair grows out of looking at things too generally". Does Clare Short take this line so that her government can continue trading with nations like Saudi Arabia and selling arms to Indonesia and try to make us feel good about it? It sounds like old-fashioned sophistry to me. Tom Crow, Fillingdon, Middx.



## Racially, clubs on a sticky wicket

MIKE Edwards of the Surrey Cricket Board (Letters, May 15) gives the official line on how the county clubs in Middlesex, Surrey, Kent and Essex cater for Asian and black cricketers.

Having played for good clubs in the Middlesex County League over 20 years, I can tell you that it is not easy, in terms of finance and acceptability, to get into the premier clubs. So you have no choice but to play for other clubs, without any access to good levels of cricket with decent wickets and facilities.

You will find most of the Asian and black clubs have created their own leagues and at times only play among themselves because so-called

premier clubs, for so-called social reasons, will not guarantee a fixture. Indian Gymkhana is not a good example, because the club has a very rich history from the past glory days, when Indian Test sides and stars used to play for them. That is precisely why leading clubs bend over backwards to have a fixture with them. A Bhattacharjee, Hayes, Middx.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied, please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. The Country Diary is on Page 10

## We failed Holocaust victims - but so did everyone else

THERE is no doubt that the International Committee of the Red Cross' track record during the second world war (Silence and lies, May 18) was greatly and tragically flawed by its inability to aid the victims of the Holocaust.

There is little doubt that the then ICRC leadership failed in its duty. Yet I feel that much of the criticism is misdirected. This impression comes in part from the manner in which the "revelations" (in Caroline Moorehead's book which none here have yet read) are being presented to the British public. The ICRC has long recognised its grave shortcomings and lack of sensitivity. Officially, it did so over 20 years ago when an independent researcher, Professor Jean-Claude Favez, published his assessment of the ICRC's action, or lack of it, with respect to the victims of Nazism. The ICRC archives have been open since January, 1996.

More to the point, however,

is the fact that the ICRC is little more than the product of its epoch. Let the failures of the ICRC not hide the fact that, 60 years ago, Western society as a whole failed. This lesson was learnt at the cost of six million lives, but on August 12, 1949, the international community finally endorsed an ICRC proposal that would protect civilians at times of conflict. This became one of the cornerstones of the "renewed" Geneva Conventions. One should remember the ICRC voice of concern or condemnation when horrors against humanity were committed in Rwanda, former Yugoslavia and West Africa among others. The ICRC knows that its institutional credibility requires transparency. Which is why Caroline Moorehead and others were welcomed in our midst. Kim Gordon-Bates, ICRC spokesperson, Geneva.



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## Now showing at too many multiplex screens near you...

IN HIS Cannes Film Festival report (May 16), Den Glazier is right to draw attention to the potential problems posed by the emphasis on production at the expense of exhibition.

The UK cinema industry currently attracts record audiences totalling some \$9 million, but does it provide them with more choice? Hardly. Film magazine (September 1996) carried an article pointing out that Glasgow had three cinemas in a three-mile radius offering a total of 23

screens - yet 11 of those screens were occupied by just three films. The Glasgow Film Theatre was the only venue to offer a film not duplicated somewhere else.

Only two British titles were screened at the multiplexes - with each getting only one performance on one day of the week. This situation is not unique to Glasgow and has not improved over the last 18 months. More screens do not mean more choice.

You don't see much non-Bollywood product in multi-

plexes or city centre cinemas. How many of the 128 British films produced in 1996 and listed in the BFI Yearbook did the multi-screens show? How many foreign language films? And for how long?

Apart from the handful of regional film theatres, the only outlet for such films are more than 250 film societies operating in the UK. Film societies not only have geographical spread, from Shetland to Jersey, Cardigan to Ipswich, providing a cinema experience (often the only one

in town), but do so offering a diversity of quality film programming which consistently delivers an annual audience of well over one million.

If film is about culture as well as commerce then, inevitably, it will be the subsidised and voluntary sector that will continue to take risks and programme independent and foreign films. David Phillips, Chair, British Federation of Film Societies Swansea.

## Better red

YOUR report that blood products from pools of British donors are to be used in the UK (May 14) reminds me of the tragedy in the early years of the HIV epidemic, when 50 per cent of haemophiliacs in England and Wales were found to have been infected with contaminated blood products. This was three times the rate in the west of Scotland, the difference being that Scottish haemophiliacs had switched to treatment with a clotting factor prepared from locally collected plasma pools. Last month I was in India, and read in a newspaper that plasma contaminated with HIV had been bought on the international market. It was a patient requiring treatment with blood products. I would prefer to take my chance on British plasma. Dr Karin Froebel, Senior Research Fellow in HIV Immunology, University of Edinburgh.

In a sense, I have been lucky. Chr C Ingalls, Hull.

## A young hackette grumbles

MEDIA Guardian's slick coverage (May 16) of the Sunday Telegraph's Catherine Pakenham Award for young women journalists suggests a significant breach between old hacks and young hackettes today.

The Diary's predictably gleeful slandering over old scoops and even older personalities (the Guardian's valiant and award-winning battle against parliamentary sleaze and the Express's "Editor's bedroom antics" expose of Paul Johnson's antics) was as nauseous as an old war veteran's reminiscences about his former glories.

Maybe today's emerging media "hotshots" are more in touch with the world than the sly and self-referential hacks at Farringdon Road would like to believe. After all, do you still think that reading about the sexual and financial improprieties of old codgers is in any way revelatory to the general public? Are we really expected to feign interest in yesterday's news?

Speaking of which, your report mentions that Deca Aitkenhead, the Guardian's own established hackette, was joint-winner of the Catherine Pakenham Award in 1997. Can I bring your readers up to date and inform them that the winner of the 1998 award for most promising female journalist talent was me? Cheers. Jenny Jarvie, London.

## On hypocrisy

MICHAEL Howard MP keeps demanding that Robin Cook hold an independent inquiry into the Sandline affair. But when his party was in power, we pressed them for an inquiry into the murder of 270 people over Lockerbie, in our own country. They refused. Dr Jim Swire, UK Families Flight 103, Bromsgrove, Worcs.



Enid Marx

# The grand design for Britain

**E**ND Marx, who has died aged 95, was one of the most individual and versatile designers of the 20th century. Utility fabrics, figured moquette seat-covers designed for London Underground; the half-penny, penny, three half-penny and two-penny stamps for Elizabeth II's accession. These were designs that impinged upon millions of people's everyday lives.

Enid Marx, Karl's distant cousin, had a genius for pattern. She was one of those rare artists interested in both craft and industrial design, loving the actual processes of making and using them to extend the frontiers of possibility. Marco — as she liked her friends to call her — was a tiny, talkative and hugely energetic person, who drew much of her creative vigour from her relentless curiosity.

She had a distant memory of yelling from her pram because she wanted a daisy, she spotted high above her, growing up a garden wall. The first book she bought with her own money as a child was on botany. For a time, she considered a career as a botanist. Her designs were always rooted in the exact observation of the natural world. Like William Morris, Marco had an early instinct for the tactile, beginning her collection of beautiful and esoteric samples, begged from the local drapers, at the age of five.

She came from a sophisticated London family. Her elder sister, Marguerite, went to work in Paris when Enid was in her teens. She flew to France herself in one of the first passenger planes, before the first world war, and absorbed the atmosphere of the Left Bank, pressing her nose against the windows of shops selling artists' materials.

At Roedean School, she was lucky to be taught by an enterprising head of art, Dorothy Martin. Unusually at a girls' public school in those days, Miss Martin's pupils drew from the nude. There were also classes in leatherwork and carpentry, which gave Enid her grounding in the use of tools. She was already veering towards textiles and, whilst still at Roedean, cut paper animals to print her first scarf.

The work of Braque and Picasso made a strong impression on her. When, in 1922, she arrived at the Royal College of Art (RCA) after a year at the Central School, she stood out as a modernist. The contemporary college magazine, Gallinuity, made the comment that "among all the misses who flit with art, she alone woos it seriously; because she is the Cassandra who prophesies the doom of the old regime of design".

She had entered the painting school, under Leon Underwood. Any other school in those days, she said, seemed "infra dig". Her fellow stu-

dents included Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious, Barnett Freedman and "Harry" Moore. The 1929 RCA centenary exhibition stressed the extraordinary convergence of talent, especially in graphics, in the "class of '22".

Enid Marx left the RCA without a diploma. Charles Ricketts, the assessor, judged her work too abstract. Her contemporaries defended her as "an outstanding student, by college standards avant garde", belonging with the Fauves in contrast to the traditional Italianate group. The RCA made late amends, creating her an honorary fellow in 1962.

One of her great friends and supporters was Paul Nash, then a young design tutor at

pened," she once said, and there was a sense in which she thrived upon the randomness. Marx was part of that upper-class, crafts ladies sub-culture in which women began to establish a separate creative and sexual identity between the wars. She met the potter Norah Braden and Katherine "Beano" Playdell Bouverie. Braden introduced her to the textile printing couple, Phyllis Barron and Dorothy Larcher, and she went to work as an apprentice in their Hampstead studio.

She was already a skilled wood engraver. With Barron and Larcher she mastered the craft of cutting blocks for textile printing. She was involved with the whole process

being used in mass production. She preferred the subtleties achievable by the old fast vegetable and mineral colours: indigo, quercitron, madder red and walnut, iron and buff. Though in the same tradition, Marx's textiles are fresher and jaunter than Barron and Larcher's. Her printed linens, organdies and velvets sold at Muriel Rose's Little Gallery in Chelsea and the modern furnishing shop, Dunbar Hay, opened in Grosvenor Street in 1936 by Cecilia Dunbar — later Lady Sempill. The star-patterned organdies were popular both for under-curtains and for party dresses.

Marx was first commissioned to design for London Transport in 1937, in the visu-

choice as designer of upholstery fabrics for wartime utility furniture. She was appointed to the design panel of the Utility Advisory Committee, chaired by Gordon Russell, and the first of her designs, including Skeldale and Flora, date from 1944. She designed almost all utility fabrics produced from then until restrictions were relaxed in 1948.

Here again the brief was rigorous. Because of wartime shortages of dye stuffs, she was at first allowed only four colours: rust, blue, green and cream. In order to avoid wastage in cutting out, repeats had to be kept small. At a time when people were being bombed out of their homes, these new designs had a role in comforting and cheering. The utility scheme affected all classes. It was the nearest Britain ever came to "art for the people". Marx was involved closely in a unique exercise in government-prescribed democratic design.

She also kept up national morale with her children's books in wartime. For *Bulgy the Barrage Balloon* (1941), she had to get official permission to make drawings of the classified barrage balloons. For *Nelson the King of the Seas* (1942), the Navy put on special demonstrations to show her how the balloons were launched. *The Pigeon Ace*, Marx's tale of an intrepid carrier pigeon, with her marvellous auto-litho illustrations, was published in 1944.

She had by now become well known as a designer of book jackets, often with her own wood-engraved decorations. Marx designed Chatter's small-scale *Zodiac* books. The style of book at present undergoing a revival: King Penguins on *Greek Terracottas*, *British Railways*, *Russian Icons* and *Some British Moths*. Frost enthusiasts still swoon over her dusty pink and blue dust cover for the Scott Moncrieff translation. She was a transformer of the previously unconsidered trifle, designing wrapping paper, Christmas cards, ephemera with deeply professional and, one might argue, deeply female commitment. She rethought the conventional boundaries of art.

Marx's passionate interest in folk art was shared with her lifelong companion, Margaret Lambert, a historian and specialist in international relations. She and Marco lived together, fiercely protective of each other, until Lambert's death in 1995. Their first joint publication was *When Victoria Began to Reign*, a coronation scrapbook (1937). This drew on Marx's knowledge of chapbooks, broadsheets, trade patterns and the "penny coloured" toy theatre sheets she and Ravilious, as students, had bought from Pollock's shop in Hoxton. She loved the quick dabble of London performance art.

In 1946, she and Lambert completed their highly original survey of *English Popular and Traditional Art*. This was followed by their even more wide-ranging *English Popular Art*, well timed for the Festival of Britain in 1951. In these books, they explored the roots and the longevity of such well-loved English artefacts as Staffordshire pottery, painted barge ware, plaited corn dollies, gingerbread moulds, and traced the mysterious unconscious connections in popular art forms from all over the world. "They were fascinated by this international language of pattern, colour, texture and technique. One of Marco's great causes — she was always strong on causes — was the establishment of a national museum of folk art. With her own collection prob-



Enid Marx... a splendid Mrs Tiggy-Winkle figure in a male-dominated world ALAN MYNNE

ably now destined for a gallery at Compton Verney in Warwickshire, this vision should to some extent be realised.

Her own substantial contribution to the folk art of her country was the 1962 set of postage stamps. She arrived at a decorative and lovely solution to the problem of producing what she called "the national visiting card", containing the formal Dorothy Widdling portrait of the Queen. These stamps were in use for 15 years. In 1976, she designed the Christmas stamps, basing her design on the *Opus Anglicanum* embroideries. The clue to Marx's visual richness, her supreme and radiant Englishness, is her way of making new connections with the past.

In 1944, she became a royal designer for industry and was

always a regular attendee at their meetings, a splendidly eccentric Mrs Tiggy-Winkle figure in the male-dominated halls of the Royal Society of Arts. She was a consummate portraitist of animals: cats, birds, butterflies, snails, walrus. Her style of dress, muffled up in layer upon layer of woolly jerseys, even in mid-summer, gave her the look of a charming small animal herself. Her wood engravings, woodcuts and line cuts of wild life place her right at the centre of a British pictorial tradition that goes back to Thomas Bewick. These are, for me, the quintessential Enid Marx.

Enid Marx, designer, born October 20, 1902; died May 18, 1998

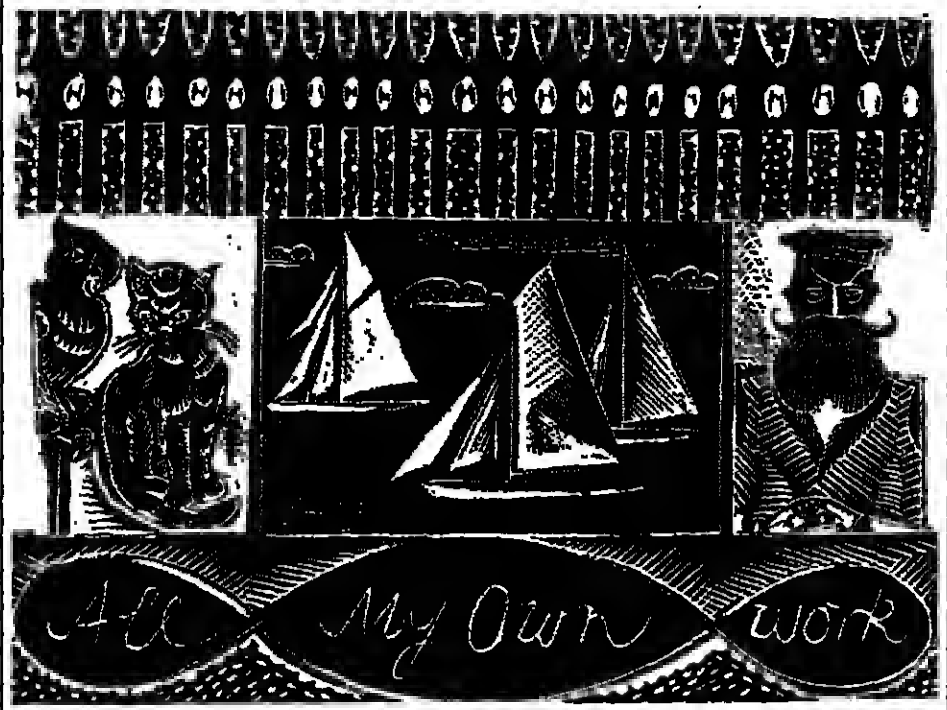
She was part of an upper-class, crafts-ladies sub-culture in which women began to establish a separate creative and sexual identity between the wars. She transformed the previously unconsidered trifle, designing with deeply professional and, arguably, deeply female commitment. She rethought the conventional boundaries of art

the RCA. He made her intensely her view of her surroundings. She described how "one looked through, I used to have velvet to get the chalk out; print, stir the gun, wash, rinse, stir again." Barron and Larcher were secretive about their recipes so Marx used to memorise them and rush home to write them down. In 1927 she started her own workshop, designing and making hand-blocked textiles, in a studio over a cowshed on Hampstead Hill.

Like Barron and Larcher — and Morris before them — Marx was reacting against the harsh chemical dyes

of dye-mixing, mordanting and steaming. She loved to describe how it worked: "In their workshop, I used to have velvet to get the chalk out; print, stir the gun, wash, rinse, stir again." Barron and Larcher were secretive about their recipes so Marx used to memorise them and rush home to write them down. In 1927 she started her own workshop, designing and making hand-blocked textiles, in a studio over a cowshed on Hampstead Hill.

ally enlightened regime of Frank Pick. She was given a strict brief. Underground seating had to look clean — even after bricklayers had sat on it. The design could not be too directional or dazzling, or it might cause travel sickness. Tonal contrast was important to stop seats appearing shabby, a demand Marx exploited in the highly successful "shield" pattern which remained in use for decades. These moquette seat covers were a triumph of burgundy and black. Marx was a pioneer of the "shield" pattern which remained in use for decades. These moquette seat covers were a triumph of burgundy and black. Marx was a pioneer of the "shield" pattern which remained in use for decades. These moquette seat covers were a triumph of burgundy and black.



Wood works... An early Marx book engraving for Francesca Allison's *A Childhood* (1937)

Sergio Motta

## The big boy from Brazil

**S**ERGIO Motta, who has died aged 57, was Brazil's minister of communications. More important, perhaps, was his closeness to the president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Commentators joked that Motta, known as "Serginho" (Big Sergio) because of his impressive girth, or "the tractor" because of his style, was Cardoso's alter ego, saying what the president would have liked to have said.

Born into a middle-class family, Motta studied engineering at a São Paulo university and got involved in left-wing politics. Like Cardoso, he was forced into exile. Back in Brazil, he joined the illegal, left-wing Catholic Popular Action, often providing shelter for dissidents. He left Pop-

ular Action in 1968 — when some of its members opted for the armed struggle — got married, and became a businessman. He helped found one of the country's leading left-wing newspapers, *Movimento*, and to help Cardoso set up what was to become a highly influential think tank, the Brazilian Centre of Analysis and Planning.

His friendship with Cardoso deepened in the 1980s, when the pair bought a country estate. Motta became Cardoso's treasurer in the 1994 elections and, once Cardoso was elected president, was appointed communications minister. It was a key position. He skillfully oversaw the introduction of mobile phones, boosting the government's coffers with \$9 billion

— far more than had been anticipated. He died too soon to complete what should have been his greatest achievement: the privatisation of the obsolete telecommunications system. At \$20 billion, it should be Latin America's largest privatisation.

Motta was an astute political operator, who steamrolled key bills through congress, sometimes playing by the corrupt rules of the discredited Brazilian system. Taped conversations suggest that he paid several congressmen to persuade them to back a constitutional amendment to allow Cardoso to run for a second term of office.

Yet Motta, passionate and aggressively outspoken, often embarrassed Cardoso with his bluntness. He scathingly

attacked politicians in Cardoso's coalition government and once warned a group of congressmen not to oppose the president. "Cardoso is a tough," he said "that his testicles are jet black". Exasperated at a social welfare organisation run by the president's wife, Ruth Cardoso, he labelled it "sociological masturbation".

For many years Motta suffered from health problems. He was a diabetic, had a lung disease, and high blood pressure. Overweight, he refused to diet. A workaholic in love with power, he once remarked prophetically: "I'll end up sacrificing my life for this government". After his lung infection began to worsen recently, he defied doctor's orders and appeared in public with tubes in his nose, linked to an oxygen canister. When friends joked that "Big Sergio" was full of gas, he replied: "It's 20 dollars a snort".

Motta abandoned many of his earlier political convic-

tions but retained some idealism, perhaps even more than President Cardoso. His vision was of a modern Brazil, which he believed Cardoso's government alone could deliver.

He was determined that windfall payments from the government's privatisation programme should be used to tackle what he saw as the country's most pressing problem — the 30 million Brazilians living below the poverty line. His last message to the president — sent by fax just before he was taken into the operating theatre — was unequivocal: "Don't think small. Fulfill your historic destiny. You must lead the transformation of our country".

Motta is survived by his wife, Wilma, and daughter, Juliana.

Sergio Motta, politician and political adviser, born November 26, 1940; died April 18, 1998

## Birthdays

Prof John Ball, mathematician and teacher, died peacefully at his home in Surrey on 18th May 1998, after a short illness. Much loved by all his family and friends. Quiet funeral service to be held at St. John's Seminary on Wednesday 20th May at 3.30 pm. No flowers. Donations to St. Luke's Cancer Centre, Royal Surrey County Hospital, Guildford. Memorial service to be announced.

the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9389 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surveys sent to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 118, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9397. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

## Death Notices

COLEMAN, Alan Tom Coleman, sculptor and teacher, died peacefully at his home in Surrey on 18th May 1998, after a short illness. Much loved by all his family and friends. Quiet funeral service to be held at St. John's Seminary on Wednesday 20th May at 3.30 pm. No flowers. Donations to St. Luke's Cancer Centre, Royal Surrey County Hospital, Guildford. Memorial service to be announced.

## In Memoriam

JAMES, Edinburghshire (Edin), May 19th 1902. Much loved father and grandfather. His thoughts always, strength and family. Please place your remembrance telegrams 0171 775 4887 or fax 0171 775 4128 between 9am and 5pm.

## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN A feature on child abuse, Pages 2 and 3, Society, May 13, we referred to Bernard Greaves, "the one-time leading Liberal activist who became a friend of [Frank] Beck". Beck was sentenced to life imprisonment for abusing young people in his care. Mr Greaves wishes us to make clear that his involvement with Beck, from the start and throughout, was professional, as a member of Beck's legal defence team. At the time of Beck's death, the team was preparing to apply for leave to appeal in the belief that Beck was the victim of a grave miscarriage of justice and that he was innocent of the charges of sexual abuse against adolescents in his care, of which he had been convicted. Bernard Greaves has asked us to say that he does not condone any form of

physical or sexual abuse or emotional exploitation of children or young people either in care or elsewhere.

IN THE Jobs & Money section, Page 10, May 18, we said, "... it is a fair bet that the German mark will switch as near one mark into two euro as makes no matter". We should have said one euro will be worth about two marks, about 68 pence at current values.

IN OUR article, Songwriters of the world unite, Go, pages 10 and 11, May 14, we referred to Lonnie Donegan's cover of a Woody Guthrie song, the title of which we misspelt as *Grand Coolie Dam*. The song is about the building of the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington state. There is no connection with the term coolie.

IN A report on Page 9 yesterday about monuments in Dublin which became targets of protest in the Troubles, we said, "George II and his horse were blown up to mark the coronation of George VII". We should have said George VI.

ANOTHER appearance for peddle when pedal was meant. On Page 6, May 15, in a story headed, Water bike rides the waves, we said "volunteers peddled (pedalled) furiously" and referred to "peddle (pedal) power".

IN OPEN Door, the readers' editor's column, Page 2, the Saturday section, May 16, Crockford's Clerical Directory, was mislabeled a dictionary.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact

## A Country Diary

**SOMERSET:** The wettest April this century was hard on sheep. Some were knee-deep in waterlogged ground, and many lambs died from pneumonia. The lovingly tended "Bowlcock" of pedigree Shetlands was protected. Their wide bars provided a separate stall for each pregnant ewe and her young when born. Dry straw covered the floor. A new layer being applied each time the damp seeped through or under the walls. This provision was costly but the result is good. It was last Guy Fawkes' Night that the champion ram was introduced for a month. So far, 22 ewes have produced 33 young. None has been lost, and one ewe has yet to lamb. The way she wanders in a kind of trance, and does not bother with the feeding trough, shows that her time is

near. This was only the second day out in the sunshine for the new lambs, some four weeks old, some only a day or two. But each lamb's strong bond with its mother is evident in anxious, bleating searches followed by enthusiastic reunions and vigorous suckling. Play on the pile of straw bales quickly distinguishes the most confident and adventurous from the more timid that hesitate on the fringe.

A few adult "wethers," rams castrated at birth make a useful contribution to society. Uncompetitive, calm and companionable, they are permanent, benevolent uncles to each generation. One beautifully compact and straight-backed ram-lamb, with a smooth and even fleece, looks like a future champion.

JOHN VALLINS

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# Analysis Releasing prisoners



## A freedom fumble that could wreck the peace

Freeing political prisoners is part of any treaty process: after all, today's terrorists can become tomorrow's leaders. But timing is of the essence. **Ewen MacAskill reports**

**I**RA and loyalist prisoners who have been released or are on the verge of freedom were responsible for much of the murder and mayhem during the Troubles. Little argument about that. But they are also being blamed this week, unfairly, for jeopardising the chances of a decisive vote in Friday's referendum on the Good Friday settlement.

The fragility of the referendum campaign is the direct result of political miscalculation rather than the prisoners themselves. The transfer of the IRA Balcombe Street gang from England to Portlaoise prison in the Republic was not a mistake. Even allowing the four men out temporarily might not have been a problem. The mistake was allowing the prisoners to appear at the Sinn Féin conference, flapping the air, a defiant victory salute that left unionists queasy. The Irish Government believed that their presence at the conference was necessary to tilt the Sinn Féin vote in favour of the settlement. Wrong. Sinn Féin would have voted for the deal anyway.

The second error, one that has appalled Downing Street because of its cack-handedness, was the temporary release of Michael Stone, a

loyalist hero for his one-man slaughter at Belfast's Milltown Cemetery. The day before or a day later and it might not have mattered too much, but to do so just as the Prime Minister was in Belfast was a bad miscalculation, allowing Stone to overshadow Tony Blair's visit.

But neither incident, no matter how repugnant to either the unionist or nationalist communities, should be a reason to vote No in the referendum. Prisoner release is a necessary part of any conflict resolution. It might be unpalatable but there is no alternative to allowing it.

Throughout the world, such releases have been central to ending civil wars, guerrilla actions and colonial revolt. Britain repeatedly has had to allow out of jail the activists who had led armed struggles to end the status of their countries as British colonies, and bid for independence. Kenya, with its years of Mau Mau terrorism in the 1950s and Cyprus with its period of Boko terrorism are two cases in point. Germany, France, Italy and Spain, in their capacity as colonial powers, have all been forced to accept the reality of prisoner release to try to resolve recent guerrilla disputes. Only in France did this backfire in the 1960s,

when many of the released guerrillas opted to return to violence.

Both the British and Irish governments share part of the blame in not preparing the population of Northern Ireland for prisoner release. Ever since the IRA ceasefire in 1994, it was inevitable that some convicted bombers and murderers would be released early from prison — and that both protestant and catholic communities would have to live with that reality.

While the issue was repeatedly discussed in private, the public went through the Downing Street declaration, the framework document and all the other political manoeuvres without being told explicitly that the final deal would involve the release of prisoners.

**A** BOOK entitled *An Introduction to Northern Ireland* issued by the Government through HMSO in 1996 boldly opened a section by stating: "There are no political prisoners in Northern Ireland. All those sentenced to terms of imprisonment have been convicted of criminal offences by the courts." That sounds hollow in the light of recent events. The

failure of both administrations to prepare the ground on prisoner release will have serious consequences if the referendum delivers a strong unionist No vote; the best chance of peace in decades screwed up.

It would not have been that difficult to sell. Former inmates are extremely visible in Belfast and Derry. Unlike ex-cons in England who usually prefer to hide their past, in the republican and loyalist areas of Northern Ireland those who get out often parade the fact they have done time inside. Releases are celebrated with elaborate parties. The Felons Club in Belfast, with a mixture of black humour and pride, awards membership only to those who have been in prison.

In all, there are about 15,000 men and women free in Northern Ireland who have served prison sentences for offences connected directly to the Troubles. Many have dropped back into anonymous civilian lives, but others are now prominent in democratic politics, in spite of their bloody and brutal past, frequently on television as spokesmen for Sinn Féin and the small loyalist parties. Prisoners are part of the political culture.

If the population fears that the men — and women — of violence will continue to

offend even after a settlement is accepted, then that at least is ungrounded: only a tiny proportion of those released commit further crimes. About 450 have been released in the last decade and only 18 have been re-imprisoned; of those only two were for paramilitary activity. Many having read extensively while behind bars, become extremely political, some become Christians, some turn against their former selves, such as Sean O'Callaghan, the ex-IRA man whose autobiography is out this week denouncing those he used to work with.

The numbers involved are much smaller than is often realised. In prison in Northern Ireland was only 1,324 inmates, for crimes ranging from murder to fine default. Out of a population of 1 million, particularly one which has been at war with itself for three decades, it is a remarkably small figure. The number in jail on paramilitary offences is only 504, of whom 88 are awaiting trial. And that is not just because of prisoner releases: even before the IRA ceasefire, those in jail for paramilitary activity were not that high. In the Republic, the picture is much the same: there are only 34 IRA prisoners left. All loyalist prisoners in the Republic have been transferred to Northern Ireland.

Both governments have used the prisoners as pawns over the last year, releasing or transferring some whenever negotiations with Sinn Féin, or to a lesser extent, the loyalist paramilitaries, have become difficult.

Between May 96 and May 98, 23 Republicans were transferred from England to Portlaoise, 17 of them since last December.

While there has been outcry over the last week as television has replayed clips of the Balcombe Street gang, the steady release of detainees over the last few months, usually in the absence of cameras, generated little heat. If the referendum vote is Yes, a special body will be set up to decide on the prisoner issue. They will be out only on licence: put back in if the ceasefires are broken. By 2000, almost all those imprisoned for paramilitary activity will be free if peace holds. Even without the deal, the bulk would have been out anyway.

The British Government, during the years when it was forced to give up its empire, often had to release those

whom it had put in prison for terrorist offences, such as Jomo Kenyatta, who went on to become prime minister of independent Kenya. Release was almost always the outcome, though the tactics varied from country to country. One ploy, used in Kenya, was to release those most likely to agree to an accommodation while keeping the extremists in jail.

The struggle for independence by Cyprus was particularly bitter in the 1950s, with the leaders of the movement for union with Greece fermenting violence and death. The future of Boko leaders who had been convicted of crimes and imprisoned by the British during the years of terror was a crucial factor in the settlement. While a general amnesty was granted to all activists who had committed crimes, it was decided that 23 top Boko men held in prison in Britain should not be allowed to return home in the early years of the republic, and part of the agreement was that they should be released and sent to live in Greece.

There are closer examples elsewhere in Europe. Dr

The Balcombe Street siege prisoner, Hugh Doherty, free for a day, was a hero to the Sinn Féin conference last week, but may have jeopardised a Yes vote in the referendum.

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN LEWIS

Michael Page, a researcher in the department of peace studies at Bradford University who has made a study of prisoner release, pointed to the split in the Basque terrorist group ETA that led one half, ETAPM, to give up violence accompanied by prisoner releases and eventually merge with the Spanish Socialist Party.

In Italy the release of prisoners early helped to undermine Prima Linea, a small leftwing group aligned with the Red Brigades. France, however, offered a wide amnesty to imprisoned members of the leftist Action Directe as well as French Basque, Breton and Corsican gunmen. Introduced as part of President Mitterrand's election pledges in 1981, it produced mixed reactions. About 20 per cent of those released are believed to have re-offended.

**T**HE triumphalism shown at the Sinn Féin conference was not by itself the reason for the hardening up of the No vote over the last week. Many unionists had been swithering, looking for a reason to vote against the settlement. The Balcombe Street gang and Michael Stone gave them a reason to drop into the No camp.

Some people cannot forget or forgive those involved in the violence. But as the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, and even the families of the victims of the violence have pointed out, the dead cannot be brought back and the release of prisoners offers a chance to prevent more pointless slaughter.

**Sources:** (1) Aspects of Britain: Northern Ireland, HMSO, 1995. Page 41; (2) Michael Page, department of peace studies, Bradford University, PhD on prisoner release and conflicts. **Graphics sources:** South Africa's Truth Commission; document prepared for Human Rights Watch by Bronwen Manby. **Graphics:** Steve Villers. **Research:** Matt Keating. Ewen MacAskill is the Guardian's Chief Political Correspondent.

The law behind closed doors  
8

South African experience  
1989

October 15  
8 imprisoned political prisoners freed 15 years sentenced along with Mandela in 1964; 150,000 took part in rallies.

December 29  
President de Klerk meets Mandela in prison.

1990

January 16-21  
African National Congress (ANC) meeting in Lusaka, Zambia.

February 2  
De Klerk announces suspension of release of Mandela and 27 others. The ANC, PAC (Pan Africanist Congress) and SACP (South African Communist Party).

February 11  
Mandela walks free after 29 years in prison; other high profile prisoners released also.

May 2-4  
ANC meets Government for preliminary talks.

May 4  
Chris Slingsby resigns as Minister of Justice in new cabinet.

August 6  
President de Klerk signs 1995 South African election law.

1991

April 20  
De Klerk announces that he will release 533 political prisoners who have served at least 10 years in prison.

1992

June  
Mandela and de Klerk announce the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CDA) to negotiate a new constitution.

August  
Further de Klerk's announcement that he will release 533 political prisoners who have served at least 10 years in prison.

September 2  
Release of 23 ANC supporters by CDA; 2000 political prisoners released.

September 26  
Mandela and De Klerk announce unconditional release of 533 ANC prisoners and 20 political prisoners.

September 29  
Release of 100 political prisoners, including 27 ANC members (ANC) and 73 South African Communist Party members.

October  
Government agrees ANC to prepare the future constitution, which grants amnesty to security force members.

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# FinanceGuardian

## Societies protest at new tax

### Anger at ruling to levy funds for Bank of England

Alex Brummer  
Financial Editor

**T**HE building societies are protesting strongly to the Government over its ruling that they must make special deposits with the Bank of England to help finance its operations.

Under the new scheme to be launched on June 1, the building societies will be required for the first time to place 0.15 per cent of their assets with the Bank at an annual cost of £100 million to their members — mortgage holders and savers with the building societies.

In the past the operations of the Bank of England have largely been paid for by the main high-street banks which it has regulated. But under the new Bank of England Act the building societies are for the first time being asked to contribute to the cost of the operations of the Bank, in what is in effect a tax on their members.

The building societies believe that the new scheme, which imposes the same charges on their operations as the high-street banks, discriminates against them as providers of financial services.

It argues that if they are to be included, then other financial services providers, like insurance and pension companies, which also benefit from the Bank of England's activities, should also be given the same treatment.

Under the terms of the Bank of England Act, the money raised from the "cash ratio deposit" levied on banks and building societies will be used to fund the Bank's operations, including the work of the Monetary Policy Committee which sets interest rates.

The building societies point out that in other countries the operations of the central bank are normally funded by the Treasury using the profit they make on issuing currency against interest-bearing deposits — known technically as seigniorage.

The new European Central Bank will be largely funded in this way.

The smaller building societies and banks with deposits of less than £400 million will be excluded from the levy, which means that local societies will escape.

The bulk of the burden will be carried by the bigger institutions like the Nationwide, Bradford & Bingley and Portman which have all been seeking to use their mutual status to offer a better deal for their members through both lower mortgage charges and higher savings rates.

#### Notebook

### Going, going, gone to French art-lover



Alex Brummer

**A**FTER a long period of uncertainty the share-owners in Christie's have come out on top. The £721 million paid for the 2721 picture sold for the French entrepreneur, Jean-François Pinault, is some 44 per cent better than the earlier, enigmatic offer received from its biggest shareholder, Joe Lewis, and SBC Warburg.

Clinton Administration appears to have rediscovered some of the zeal which led to the breakup of the old AT&T over a decade ago and was partly instrumental in preventing IBM sweeping all before it in an earlier computer generation.

Now it is the turn of Microsoft to feel the heat. This time, the Justice Department has lengthened the odds, wheeling in attorney general Janet Reno, supported by a number of state prosecutors to press the case.

At the heart of the dispute is the attempt by Microsoft to ship its Windows 95 software, complete with its own Internet Explorer web browser. The decision to offer only its own browser — when it is the dominant supplier of personal computer operating systems — is plainly anti-competitive, depriving of alternative access software such as that of Netscape.



Pump inaction... Smaller filling stations fearing closure are crying foul over the OFT's clearing of leading oil companies and supermarkets on unfair pricing. PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE

## Fury as watchdog clears oil giants of predatory pricing

Petrol retailers condemn findings as bland and cosy, reports ROGER COWE

**T**HE Office of Fair Trading cleared supermarkets and leading oil companies yesterday of predatory pricing.

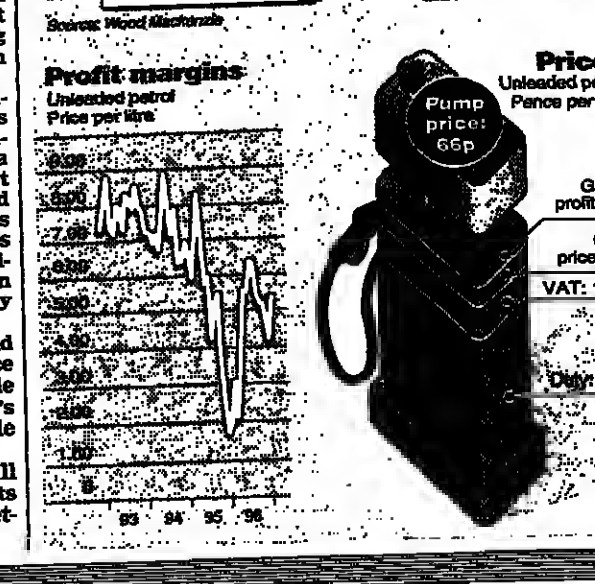
But petrol retailers, who fear the wholesale closure of smaller stations, reacted angrily. Christopher Macgowan, the retailers' spokesman, described the OFT's latest investigation as "bland and cosy" and said the competition watchdog had failed to protect consumers, who would have to pay higher prices in future.

"Far from acknowledging that the supermarkets and the oil companies are creating significant problems for consumers, they have missed a big opportunity to help consumers get a better deal," he said.

John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading, said the OFT investigation had found no evidence of unfair competition de-

#### Share of the pumps

|      | Total number of sites | Supermarket sites |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1989 | 20,018                | 179               |
| 1990 | 19,756                | 245               |
| 1991 | 19,465                | 294               |
| 1992 | 19,247                | 357               |
| 1993 | 18,549                | 467               |
| 1994 | 17,969                | 575               |
| 1995 | 16,971                | 708               |
| 1996 | 16,244                | 829               |



## Northern Rock beats retreat on 'short-changing'

Lynne Bateson and Jill Treasman

**N**ORTHERN Rock yesterday caved into pressure from the Office of Fair Trading after criticism that the bank had short-changed some of its 1.1 million customers.

The OFT last week accused the former building society of the "cavalier" attitude to savers when it restructured savings accounts, locking some customers into lower interest

rates. Now Northern Rock has pledged that savers will receive written notice of any future changes of at least the notice period on their account.

It has also suspended all notice periods on its savings accounts until June 18 to permit savers to transfer or move their accounts without penalty.

The OFT, which has launched an inquiry, yesterday welcomed Northern Rock's move as bringing "equity to its contracts with customers".

Customers could approach the Banking Ombudsman to seek any redress they felt was due as a result of their accounts being moved.

Despite yesterday's change of heart, officials from Northern Rock and the OFT will meet on Thursday to agree changes to wording in customer contracts.

The British Banking Association yesterday denied that the Banking Code, still less than a year old, needed to be changed.

Northern Rock is a signatory to the code which says banks and building societies should tell customers of account changes as soon as possible.

The code does not say that customers should be told in time to avoid penalties if they wish to move or that penalties should be waived.

Roger Miles, of the British Bankers Association, said the code, developed after consultation with the OFT, was not at fault.

"The linchpin of the code is fair and reasonable dealings with customers. Every single clause in the body of the text should be interpreted in this light."

"However, if it emerges that the code needs changing we will look at this. The code is organic."

Most high street banks and most building societies have signed the code.

Hallifax, which has 15 million savers, said that when it brought out a new account it allowed, when appropriate, existing customers a one-off chance to move without pen-

alty. Paul Duffin, general manager of banking and saving, said: "In doing so we believe we are following the code."

David Davies, the Conservative backbench MP campaigning for banks and building societies to tighten their codes of practice on informing customers about account changes, said: "This is excellent news for Northern Rock's customers and shows they must have had a sharp re-appraisal of the importance of their customers' rights."

#### Test for Microsoft

**B**ILL GATES is so used to having his own way in business, that he appears less than well prepared for a tussle with the US Justice Department. Under anti-trust chief Joel Klein, the

biotech breakthroughs emphasise why it is important British Biotech comes clean quickly and lifts the shadow over the UK sector.

#### BDB chief vows to avoid digital set-top box war

Simon Beavis  
Media Business Editor

**C**ONSUMERS will not be caught in a "set-top box war" between rival digital television operators when they launch competing services this autumn, the new chief of digital terrestrial broadcaster BDB has pledged.

Stephen Grabner, head of the company jointly owned by Carlton and Granada, said yesterday: "I am confident there will be no set-top box war because it is in nobody's interest to have one."

Last week the Independent Television Commission hinted that a dispute between BDB and BSkyB over set-top boxes showed some signs of being resolved.

But sceptics continue to believe that consumers will be faced with a confusing and expensive choice this autumn.

#### TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

|                 |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Australia 2.539 | Austria 2.819     | Germany 2.819     | Malaysia 8.15     | Singapore 2.819   |
| Belgium 2.819   | Greece 4.912      | Hong Kong 12.21   | South Africa 1.85 | Spain 2.819       |
| Canada 0.831    | India 6.07        | Ireland 1.118     | Netherlands 3.161 | Sweden 12.22      |
| Cyprus 0.831    | Italy 2.787       | Israel 5.87       | Norway 11.84      | Switzerland 2.819 |
| Denmark 10.78   | Japan 1.118       | Portugal 2.819    | New Zealand 2.819 | Turkey 2.819      |
| Finland 8.641   | South Korea 1.118 | Saudi Arabia 5.87 | USA 1.586         |                   |
| France 9.419    | Switzerland 2.819 |                   |                   |                   |

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shatel and indollar)

Goodwood J

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TheGuardian











Cricket

David Hopps finds Leicestershire's Mr Nice Guy all fired up to face South Africa on his England debut in this week's one-day series

# Mild Maddy ready for mayhem

IN THE Leicestershire dressing-room they are already ribbing Darren Maddy about his whole image. He will have to brace himself again, because it has to be said that awaiting his England debut in the Texaco Trophy against South Africa on Thursday is a young man so inoffensive that he could play the hero in a Famous Five novel and still be home in time for tea.

"He's Squeaky Clean, they're calling me," Maddy confessed ruefully over lunch in a Leicester wine bar. He had already apologised profusely for an imagined delay that nobody had noticed and because his original choice for lunch

Road and over the practice nets, still has Leicestershire's coach Jack Birkenshaw purring with delight weeks later.

"I can remember looking at that bungee jump the first time and telling myself that if I can do this I can face the quickest bowlers in the world, I'm not going to be intimidated by anything."

"When I'm facing one of the world's best bowlers I can feel the nervous energy, the excitement. That is the buzz that I live for. If you can turn that stress and energy to your advantage."

Then modesty intervened. "Not that I've had too many stressful situations in my short career so far."

Maddy, who turns 24 on Saturday, owes his promotion to an impressive England tour of Kenya and Sri Lanka last winter, where the management team of Mike Gatting and Graham Gooch delighted in his eagerness to learn, welcomed his incessant questions and observed an intimidating fitness routine that made more lackadaisical tourists blanch. Don't worry about Darren: just throw him a ball, or suggest a jogging route or flat him a squash partner, that will keep him happy.

No one respects such an energetic approach more than Gooch who, left to his own devices, would choose England hotels by the size of their fire escapes, for the purposes of dawn fitness training. But even he occasionally felt obliged to tell Maddy to relax.

In the third Sri Lanka A Test at Moratuwa, Maddy was 22 not out overnight. The family holiday had been cancelled because of a terrorist bomb in Colombo, but his father Bill, a keen club cricketer who had come to regard himself as a jinx on his son, was in the crowd.

On 99, Maddy briefly imagined a single behind square, Mark Ealham loyally dropped his head and ran, and Maddy was run out. He returned to the dressing-room, grabbed a Ron Jovi tape — "good angry music" — and sought out a deserted stand where he could be alone for the next hour. Well, almost alone.

"I wasn't angry with Mark Ealham," he said. "I was angry with me, for not being man enough, not being strong-minded enough, to say 'No'. I was distraught but none of the Sri Lankan spectators realised I was the man just dismissed and they all wandered up for a chat. Before I knew it I was signing hundreds of autographs."

England's cricketers are increasingly fast-tracked through age-group sides, identified so early that, in some cases, their appreciation of the opportunity diminishes in inverse ratio to their self-esteem. Maddy, run out for luck in both knocks he faced for England Under-17s, values what he earns. Over four years he has worked his way through the county system, an emergence which owes much to the influence of his captain, James Whitaker.

"James is the most positive man you could meet," Maddy said. "I didn't feel part of the



Clean-cut hero... Darren Maddy is equipped technically and mentally to take on Allan Donald's pace

TOM JENNINGS

Leicestershire side at first but when James took over the captaincy I received all the encouragement I needed."

One technique adopted by Maddy was a replica of Whitaker's own habit a decade earlier. On the last of his five winters in South Africa, Maddy wrote down his goals and stuck the message on his

wardrobe. Early every morning he leapt out of bed for a jog to read that he wanted to play for England.

He rabbits away about the prospect, with an artless, wide-eyed excitement, a man slightly out of kilter with a more cynical age. His enthusiasm makes malcontents retreat from his path.

If he was to pin up messages this season, he would aim for an England Test debut, a Leicestershire championship and a tour to Australia. He may well achieve all three, and even if he does he will not change too much. "I'm sensible, I suppose," he suggested. "I'm not a party animal who likes to stay up

until five in the morning. You can keep enjoying the hard life, the fast cars, the fast women, or you can start to be serious about your career. I enjoy the movies, or reading a book, or a quiet night with my girlfriend. I take pride in my appearance and performance. It's nothing to be ashamed of, is it?"

'I am not a party animal who stays up all night. I'm sensible, I suppose'

had been too crowded. It would have been no surprise if he had offered the waitress a hand with the washing-up.

This perception will probably weaken in time. One day he will probably swear at a bowler and feel better for it. But for the moment, when he walks out to bat for England for the first time, we have a chance to delight in the virtuous achievement of an international sportsman entirely lacking in conceit.

It would be appallingly mistaken, though, to construe Maddy's courteous nature and boyish, slightly sticky-out-ear, devotion as a sign of weakness, to suggest that without a streak of arrogance he is unlikely to progress at international level.

'When I'm facing a world-class bowler I feel the excitement. It's the buzz I live for'

Unassuming and earnest he might be but here is a sportsman eager to seek out the adrenalin rush. He has twice done the highest bungee jump in South Africa, at Mussel Bay on the Garden Route from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town, and he loves seeking out the latest white-knuckle ride.

On the way to the wine bar we had passed a place called Laser Quest, a war-games arcade where combatants fling themselves around obstacles in the dark and shoot at one another with lasers. "We'll go for a game if we've time," he suggested blithely.

The likelihood is that he will not find time for the rest of the summer. South Africa's fast bowlers, led by Allan Donald, will have him in their sights. He is equipped, technically and mentally, to meet the challenge. He has begun the season superbly, and one look shot against Wasim Akram, which flew out of Grace

Rugby Union

# Castaignede weighs up English offers

Robert Armstrong

TWO of Europe's most gifted playmakers, Thomas Castaignede and Gregor Townsend, may be on their way to new clubs in what promises to be a summer of high-profile transfer activity.

The Frenchman, in London yesterday to receive an £8,000 award as Heineken European Player of the Year, may join one of three Premiership clubs eager to sign him and the Scot is likely to make the reverse journey across the channel to join Brive whose No. 10 Alain Penaud is replacing the retiring Michael Lynagh at Saracens.

Castaignede, whose distinctive skills helped inspire France to a second successive Grand Slam this season, has admitted that three English clubs — Bath are understood to be among them — have made approaches through his London agent to acquire his services for next season.

Townsend, who is refusing to sign a new contract with Northampton, has been targeted by last year's European champions Brive, who are ambitious to regain the crown taken by Bath in January.

The 23-year-old Castaignede said: "Since the Five Nations,

three clubs have approached me and I have to make up my mind whether to come here or stay at home. I may come here because I like the way rugby is played in this country, but I have to think about my World Cup ambitions, and if they are best served by playing in France then I will remain there."

The far higher salaries paid by leading English clubs could price the France fly-half's current employer, Castres, out of the market. Castaignede, who has 18 caps, would expect to earn around £200,000 a season, almost three times the salary Castres have been playing since he made his international debut in 1995.

The 25-year-old Townsend feels he has been marking time at Northampton since he helped the Lions win a Test series in South Africa last summer. He has played for the club at centre while England's Paul Grayson has worn the No. 10 shirt.

Newcastle are also understood to be interested in Townsend although Rob Andrew insists he will continue at No. 10 next season.

Tim Stimpson, the England and Lions full-back put on the transfer list by Newcastle last October, has agreed a three-year deal with Leicester.

# Derwyn Jones to sue Welsh union

Paul Rees

THE former Wales second-row Derwyn Jones will make rugby history this week when he takes the Welsh Rugby Union to court over an alleged breach of contract.

The 27-year-old Jones is making an application for a summary judgment in the High Court in Cardiff after losing his playing and development-officer contracts with the WRU last September.

The contracts were worth a total of £40,000 a year and were due to run until October next year. Jones and his solicitor Rick McTaggart have held talks with the WRU but their differences will now be resolved in court.

Jones lost the contracts after being dropped from the Wales team and then the squad. The summary judgment application means he is seeking an instant decision from the judge.

Jones arguably became the first player in the world to turn professional, in the sense of supporting himself solely by his rugby, when he resigned from the police force in June 1995, two months before the International Board abandoned amateurism.

He supplemented his Cardiff playing "expenses" with his development officer's salary from the WRU.

"I was earning the same money, around £18,000 a year, but it meant I was able to devote all my time to rugby," said Jones. "When rugby went open, my combined income from Cardiff and the WRU meant I was earning £75,000 before bonuses."

"To lose £40,000 of that was a big blow. I have been very fortunate to be playing for Cardiff the whole time in Wales which can afford to operate a full-time squad, and they have been very good to me."

Neither Jones nor McTaggart was prepared to comment on the case in advance of Thursday, but their contention is held to be that the union was in breach of both of Jones's contracts by ending them abruptly.

A clause in the playing contract stipulated that it would be void if he were left out of the successive national squads, but he lost it after being omitted from only one. The union has argued that it was within its rights in terminating the playing contract.

# Peace breaks out as Test ban threat to England is lifted

ENGLAND have escaped any punishment from the world governing body, the International Board, after a peace deal was brokered with the Rugby Football Union in Dublin yesterday.

The settlement, which protects England's Test future, comes after they had faced the threat of being thrown out of world rugby by the IB. The board had called the RFU to account for the Premiership clubs' action in considering resort to the European Commission to resolve their dispute with Twickenham.

The IB had said that England should control the clubs and threatened the RFU with suspension from the board. That would have meant the cancellation of future Test matches and put a question mark over England's participation in the World Cup.

But, after a six-hour meeting, England escaped without any form of punishment. A five-man delegation from Twickenham met the IB executive committee and Vernon Pugh, the board's Welsh chairman, said talks had been constructive.

The Australian Dick McGruther, chairman of the board's Game Regulations Committee, said: "Penalties against England were not even discussed. But we do have evidence that some English players were still eligible for their clubs and still could not make the tour to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa."

Mark Allen of Northampton is the likely replacement for Leicester's Will Greenwood who has withdrawn from England's summer tour with a shoulder injury.

# Students bow to Gough

MICHAEL GOUGH, who marked his arrival on the first-class scene last week with 62 in the County Championship match against Essex, yesterday became Durham's youngest century-maker when he compiled 123 against Cambridge University at Fenner's.

The 18-year-old graduate of the Durham academy, a member of England's Under-19 World Cup-winning squad, shared an opening partnership of 227 with Stewart Hutton, who scored 100. Durham declared their first innings on 270 for three and reduced the students to 21 for three by the close.

At The Parks Warwickshire's second-string wicket-keeper Tony Frost scored a maiden first-class century against Oxford University. The 22-year-old, deputising for Keith Piper, hit an unbeaten 111 to lift his weakened side from 105 for five to 307 for seven declared.

Tim Munton then removed the Oxford opener Douglas Lockhart for four — his first wicket since September 1996 — as Oxford closed on 26 for one.

Martin McCague is expected to make his Test debut against the South Africans at Canterbury today.

The former England fast bowler has experienced problems with his rhythm and action this season but the Kent coach John Wright believes he is ready to return.

"Martin has put in an enormous amount of work in the close season to get himself fit," Wright said. "He is just itching to get out in the middle again and really get back to his best."

Trevor Ward may captain Kent if Steve Marsh opts to rest a groin strain. Dean Headley and Carl Hooper will probably sit this one out too, while Matthew Fleming and Mark Ealham are with the England one-day squad.

Athletics

# Pascoe passes the baton on £5m shares to take up running of televised meetings

Duncan Mackay

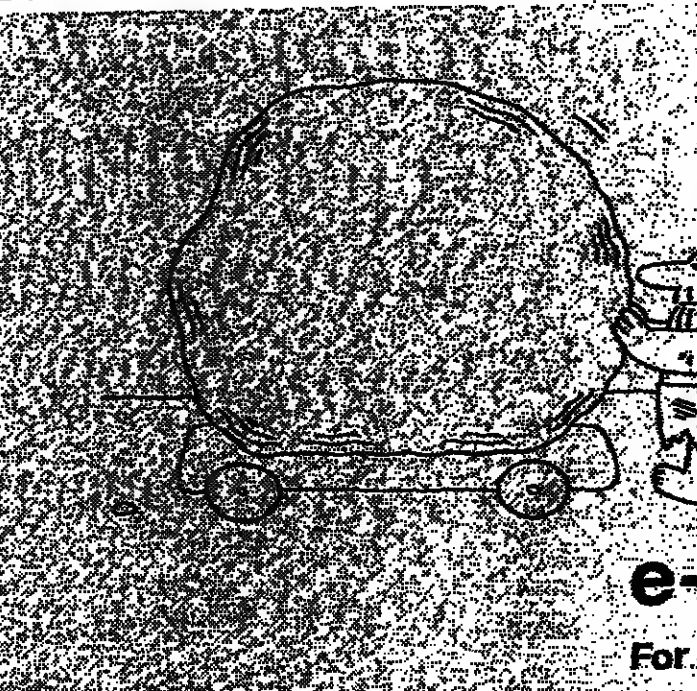
ALAN PASCOE, the former international hurdler, will announce today that he is ready to turn back the clock to help relaunch impoverished British athletics.

Pascoe has cut his ties with APT, the sports marketing company he founded in 1984, by selling his 40 per cent stake for £5 million in order to clear the way to set up a new body to run Britain's four televised meetings this summer.

He will today unveil his new company which will work in partnership with UK Athletics '98, the organisation currently administering the sport. UK Athletics has acquired the TV rights to the major meetings from the administrators who took over the financial affairs of the British Athletic Federation when it became insolvent in October with £2 million debts.

UK Athletics has negotiated a separate deal with Pascoe's new company, which will stage the events and arrange sponsorship. It is understood that Pascoe will take no profit during the first year to help the meetings succeed financially.

"The completion of the sale of APT has given me the chance to review how I want to spend my time in the future," said Pascoe. "I have decided to take the opportunity to concentrate on creating a specialist 'boutique' approach with several high-level strategic projects that I've had little time for while building APT."



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